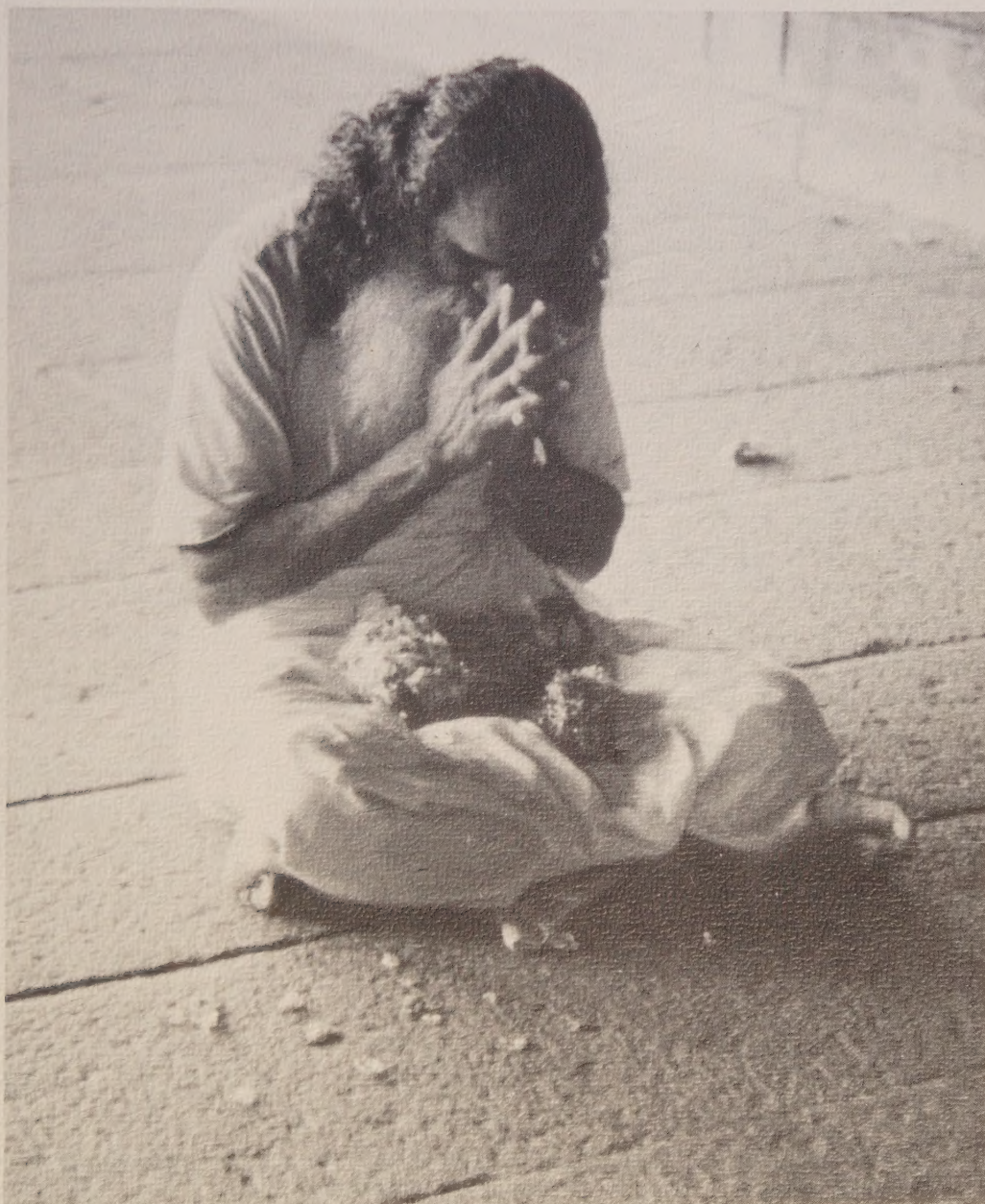


Integral Yoga

A MAGAZINE OF THE INTEGRAL YOGA INSTITUTE



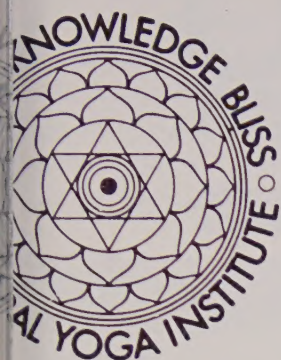
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INTEGRAL YOGA INSTITUTE

Founder-Director: Yogiraj Sri Swami Satchidananda

A Non-Profit, Non-Sectarian Organization

L:	Healthy body, sound mind, dynamic will, ethical perfection, universal brotherhood, selfless service, Self-Realization.
WAY:	Asanas, pranayama, chanting of holy names, self-discipline, meditation, manthra japa, study and reflection.
ASSES:	Hatha Yoga, Chanting, Meditation, Lectures and Discussions.

Readers,

Once a year, we at the Integral Yoga Institutes and Satchidananda Ashram put forth our best efforts to offer the essence of Swami Satchidananda's teachings of Integral Yoga in the form of a TEN-DAY YOGA RETREAT. This year, Swamiji himself will be present for the entire Retreat, which will take place June 15-24 on a beautiful 1500-acre country site in the Catskill Mountains. A complete program of Yoga practices will be offered, including meditation (with special instruction for beginners), Yoga postures, breathing and relaxation, lectures, discussions and other practices. Carefully prepared vegetarian meals will be served. One feature of this year's Retreat makes it particularly special -- several of the country's prominent spiritual teachers have been invited to join us for an evening each; among them Baba Ram Dass, Brother David Steindl-Rast, Shlomo Carlbach, Sant Keshavadasji and others. This unique ten-day experience will bring us all together to share in the benefits of true inner silence and in the joy and growth of a real spiritual festival.

All of you are urged to contact your local IYI for details and applications.

OM Shanthi

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THE WAY TO PEACE

PPeace, Atman, Brahman, Freedom, Eternity, Nirvana, Immortality, Moksha -- all of these are ultimately synonymous terms. Righteousness and peace are inseparable. Love and peace embrace each other. Peace and unity walk together with clasped hands. Desirelessness moves hand in hand with peace. There can be no peace without love of God.

This peace is not an inert passive state. It is not a hypnotic trance. It is not at all a negative condition. It is a positive state of spiritual attainment. It is your center, ideal and goal. It is the pivot of human life, the soul's quest. It is perfect awareness.

The kingdom of peace is beyond all speech, thought and imagination. It can only be reached by patient spiritual practices. To reach it is to be in communion with the Supreme Soul.

PPeace is your birthright. Realize this peace and be free. Names and forms are illusions. God alone, the Supreme Consciousness, is the ultimate Reality.

Strife can be overcome by continual meditation. Give up all selfish efforts and free yourself from the wild unrest of ignorance. Be still. Be in tune with the Divine Will. Let go all your worries, your anxieties. Get deep down into the innermost recesses of your heart and know the peace that is within you.

SSeek to live according to the

divine law -- the golden rule. First endeavor to harmonize your own affairs. First establish the kingdom of peace in your own heart. It is individual peace that paves the way towards universal peace. The attainment of the "peace that passeth understanding" is the greatest work that one can do for humanity. Such a person radiates peace. All who come in contact with him are influenced by his soul-elevating, harmonious vibrations. Hatred ceases in his presence.

It is useless to talk of the total abolition of war while you yourself are full of petty jealousy and private resentments. A nation is comprised of individuals. Lead a life of peace by striving to live beyond prejudice, envy, selfishness, greed for power and possessions. Lead a simple life. Practice meditation daily and realize peace in your own heart. Then radiate it and disseminate it far and wide. Preach the gospel of peace to all the men and women of the world.

If you annihilate selfishness, greed and egoism you will be freed from anxiety and fear, because you are allowing your individual will to become one with the Cosmic Will. Whosoever surrenders his selfish aims and interests to the Will of the Lord will know the highest peace.

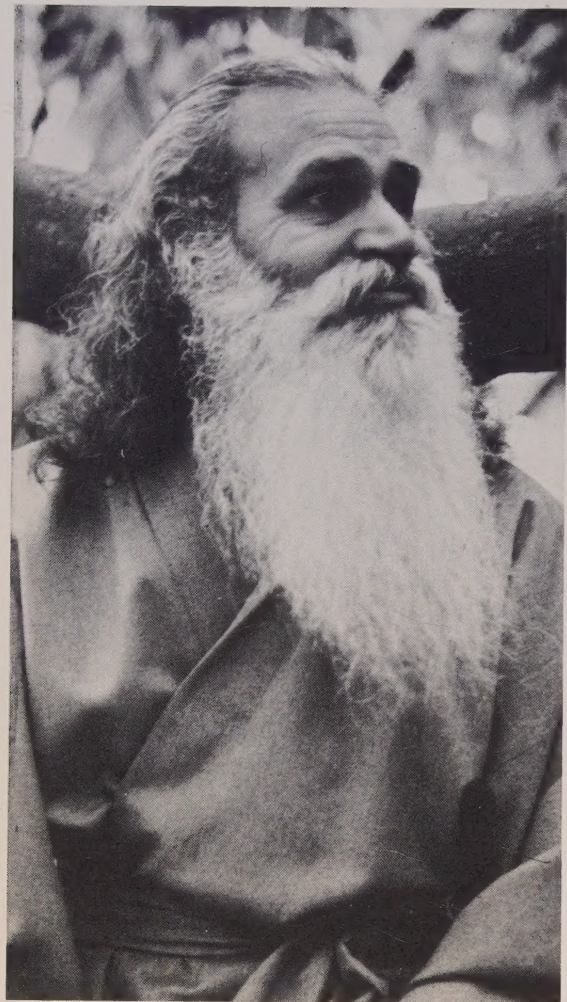
RReform yourself first. Society will then reform itself. Get worldliness out of your heart. The world will be peaceful. This is the only solution for the establishment of lasting and permanent peace in every country.

This is not escapism, but the only way to face the situation. This is not pessimism, but great optimism. If each man tries to work out his own salvation, there will be no one to create the problems and disharmony. If each man strives, heart and soul, to practice his re-

ligion, to do spiritual practices and to attain God-realization, he will have very little inclination and very little time to create quarrels. There will be peace on earth automatically.

Swami Sivanandaji





The only way to be happy always is to dedicate yourself completely to God, or the entire humanity. Put the world first and yourself last. Then and only then will you really find peace and joy. This is the basic teaching of Yoga and of all religions: Give, give, give. Let every minute of your life be useful to humanity. Bring peace and joy to everybody and no harm to anybody. This is the only way to true happiness. There are no short-cuts.

Lovingly yours,

Swami Satchidananda

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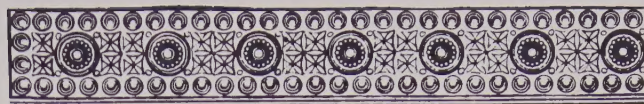
唯一可使經常快樂的就是把你的一切獻給全人類。將世界放在第一位，而你本身排在最後。只有在這樣一剎那，你才真正獲得寧靜和快慰。瑜珈和一切宗教的基本教導就是：給與，佈施，貢獻。讓生命中的每一分秒都為人類服務。帶給每個人寧靜和歡樂，而無損於任何人。這是趨向真正快樂的道途；並無其他捷徑的。

實哲締難陀題

後學 吳述祖 謹譯

THE BASICS

Excerpted from a talk by Swami Satchidananda



The whole purpose of Yoga is to realize the essential oneness of all creation, to come face to face with the unity behind the apparent alienation and separation. Our daily experience seems to deny any possibility of unity. When we see so many kinds of people, how can we really be united? How can we find the same Self in everybody? How do we become so separated?

To find some clues, let's ask some different questions. What makes you say, "I am an American"? How did you become an American? How did I become an Indian? What is the American part in you now? What is the place? You attribute yourself to the place where you live or the place where you took birth and say that you are an American. I connect myself with the place where I took birth and I say that I am an Indian. We must understand that because we are connecting ourselves with the places, we are dividing ourselves. What is the difference between a doctor and a painter? The difference is in the knowledge that they have gathered, that's all. If I have a particular knowledge of the conditions and ailments of the body, you say "I am a doctor". Because I do not have that knowledge, I cannot claim to be a doctor. I do have some other knowledge and so I call myself by a name connected with that.

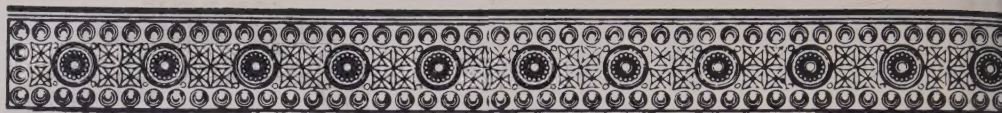
The mind loses sight of its real intrinsic nature, the source of its being, because it has become clouded by attachments and desires and thoughts. The result is that you are no longer able to tap the source of your true Self. You do not realize that your body, senses, mind, intellect and ego are instruments for the

Spirit which is beyond them. You identify with one or more of these instruments and naturally you start to think that you are bound by the limitations which belong to these instruments. The limited perspective of the mind makes you feel that you are doing everything yourself, and causes this feeling of alienation from the rest of Creation.

Without any attachments or connections, everyone will give the same answer to the question "Who are you?" The answer is "I am". Yes, there are all these passing names and forms, but underlying all this diversity is an ultimate unity of being.

To see this is Yoga. But Yoga doesn't mean that all the blood must be taken from us and poured into one common barrel. That all the bones must be taken, made into one shape and redistributed again so that all have the same flesh, same bones, same blood. Not at all. Material balance, physical balance, mental balance is unnecessary; no amount of variety can detract from the central fact of "I am".

One must always look deeper than the surface appearances of all these forms which change, age and pass away. All that I call mine is not really me. My house is not me. I am the owner of the house. I can talk about "my body", so I can't be the body. I say "my personality" because I am the one who possesses it and watches it develop and interact with other personalities. There are times when you say, "My brain isn't functioning this morning" or "I can't make up my mind today". This means that the brain and the mind too are your instruments, and sometimes they go out of control. And when they do, there is something deeper in you which is able to observe them.



The question "Who are You?" can be approached through the process of elimination, calling into question all that you say is yours. In the Hindu scriptures this is called "Neti, Neti", meaning "not this, not this..." You discard everything. All the labels. All of them. And who ultimately remains? - The you who was discarding all -- and that is you again.

The Self which God made "in His own image" is to be understood like that. The real Self, which is our essence, can only be approached without talking. We can never say, "Oh, this is the real Self." We can only say, "This is not the essence, and this is not the essence, and this is not..." When the question of Self comes in, we are simply silent. It is untold. Unexpressed. Speech and understanding are both finite faculties, and the limitless cannot be encompassed in the limited. When we speak, it is all mind talking to mind. The Self doesn't talk to the Self and does not need to.

The mind loses its narrow ego-perspective by turning within, towards the Source, the real Light. That is actually what happens in the spiritual practice. We "lose" ourselves by learning to tap the Source, and once we do that, the real light shines by itself. There is no longer anything masking it. The individual self which seemed individual because of the fence created by the mind and its thoughts of "I", "me", and "mine", loses its separateness and becomes one with the Higher Self. The feeling of alienation is transcended.

Ramakrishna used to say, "The musk deer searches all over the world for the source of the scent which is itself." It is only when we are ready to still the body, still the mind and the senses, and look within, that we can begin to perceive the real image

of our essential nature. The inward turning will come only when we grow weary of our attachments, our outside dependencies. We have to learn that all these desires and cravings arise out of the mistaken notion that happiness is an object external to ourselves. All of our Sadhana (spiritual practices) are aimed at the realization of this lesson.

Even in the spiritual life, however, there is a tendency to form outside attachments. You can go here, there, everywhere -- to this teacher, to that master, to this church, to that temple -- but you will not really see that Higher Being or God or Cosmic Force or Divine Light just by going. And you never will, because it's not just a thing to be seen from the outside. If you go looking for it somewhere "out there", you'll never see it. Yet you can see it everywhere.

Sometimes people tell me, "Because we don't have God, we go before an altar to experience Him." I say to them, "Please, when you go to the temple or church take God with you, because if you don't have Him here, you won't really find Him there either."

Other people say, "What are all those foolish things in temples and churches? There are better statues in the shops and better paintings in the museums. How silly to prostrate before an altar like a child playing. How can that be God? All I see is a table, a stone image and a piece of paper with a picture on it." Yes, I admit that they see only a few ordinary everyday things there. That is because there is not God within, so they can't possibly see God without.

A thing in itself is nothing. It all depends on how you see it. It is all in your attitude. If you find it difficult to see the Self on the outside, that means that you have not found it inside. Once you have touched



My storehouse having been burnt down,
Nothing obstructs my view of the bright moon.

Mashade

32



it within you, you will find it everywhere.

There is only one God, one Cosmic Force, and it is He who expresses himself at the heart of everything in Creation. If you go to meet the universe from behind the walls of your own ego, then it will all be a jumble of names and forms. If, however, you jump these ego-erected barriers and embrace the universe head-on, you discover that it is all the same "I am" everywhere.

There is a saying, "In order for the eye to perceive color, it must itself be free of color." Only when the eye is clear can it perceive things clearly. It is the mind, of course, that sees through the eyes and hears through the ears. That's why in Yoga our main work is to purify the mind, to free it from the bonds which limit its perception. As the mind becomes settled it grows clear and pure and open. No longer is it so easily batted around by every passing wind. It grows steady, and in that steadiness you get the reflection of the Light.

You must begin by being willing to take that Light with you. If you want to see God in everything, then you must take God with you and make your vision a Godly vision. You must be willing to let go of the "mine" and embrace the "Thine". As you free the perception from the distortions of the ego, you realize that it is all the same Self in everything, everybody -- the same light. That is the Self-Realization, and it is why the Bible says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." It doesn't say love your neighbor as your neighbor, but as yourself. But how can you love him as yourself when you are not in touch with what Self you really are? Are you this body that ages? These moods, thoughts, feelings that change? Isn't there some-

thing deeper, some essence?... As long as you love through your physical body, you see only other physical bodies outside. As long as you love through your mental body, through your knowledge or intelligence, you see only the other man's knowledge or intelligence. It's like a pendulum. If a pendulum swings twenty-five degrees to one side, it will swing twenty-five degrees to the other. If it goes thirty degrees to the right, it will go thirty degrees to the left. If your perception begins with the physical, it detects the physical side and nothing more. If you have understood yourself to be the mental side, you will likewise reach the other man's mental side. But if you have understood yourself to be the real Spirit and start from there, you will touch the Spirit in others. To see the Spirit in them, you must come to terms with and accept the Spirit in you as your essence.

So it is not only charity that begins at home but also spirituality. Everything begins at home. So let us always start from where we are. Know thyself and then you can know everything. You know so much geography, mathematics, history and so forth; you invent this and discover that; you know every part of a certain machine, you can simply take it to pieces. Why don't you take yourself to pieces and see what is there? Do you know every screw and nut and bolt in you? How many nuts are loose in you? How many bolts? We are always going with a screwdriver to tighten other nuts, but we don't even know how many nuts are loose here. Let's first know this mechanism and the spirit that moves the mechanism.

Distinguish between the impermanent and the abiding, between the passing phenomena and the Real. Without knowing this, what is the point of knowing anything else?



*I*t is the most distant course that comes nearest to thyself, and that training is the most intricate which leads to the utter simplicity of a tune.

*T*he traveller has to knock at every alien door to come to his own, and one has to wander through all the outer worlds to reach the innermost shrine at the end.

*M*y eyes strayed far and wide before I shut them and said "Here art thou!"

*T*he question and the cry "oh, where?" melt into tears of a thousand streams and deluge the world with the flood of the assurance "I am!"

Rabindranath Tagore

CAN VEDANTA HELP US UNDERSTAND CHRISTIANITY?

Dear Friends,

Your response to the thoughts I shared with you in the Jayanthi issue encouraged me to tackle a few other basic questions. One letter I received gives us so good a starting point that I'd like to share it with you in full.

"Dear Brother David,

When I was younger, I was turned off of Christianity (actually, I was never turned on) because most of the teachings - at least in terms of dogma - seemed like fairy tales. Now I'm aware that that was partly my problem, the way I was educated, rational and scientific in the narrow sense. And I took the teachings in a literal way. Even now, the doctrines of Christianity seem to be nonsense on the literal level. But it seems that many of them at least are not meant to be taken literally.

Since getting into Yoga, I've studied some Vedanta philosophy and I've heard that Vedanta may provide a kind of key to understanding Christianity -- that it unlocks the real meaning of the parables and symbols and stories and so on. If this were so, then it may be that a person like myself could recover his own tradition (for I find that, after all, Christianity still is important to me). I'd like to believe this is the case, but I don't know whether it is so or just facile comparison and wishful thinking. No doubt, as Swamiji says, truth is one, and all religions, all paths lead to it; but at one level lower, I'd like to know what you see as the relation



between Christianity and Vedanta, to what extent Vedanta provides an access to the real meaning of Christian teachings, and how one could follow this out.

finally, to be completely frank, I'd like to say that I even feel some reservation in asking, because I'm afraid that there is a Catholic commitment to maintaining dogma on a level accessible to all, and that this could make a reply less than completely candid. But I don't have this feeling about you personally (I've met you at both Annhurst retreats) and so I'm really asking you this in all sincerity."

Let me tackle the last point first: the Catholic commitment to dogma. What is this commitment supposed to be? -- a commitment to truth. That is its whole meaning, its whole justification. But remember what we said about truth (Ray 16, "What Is Your Attitude Towards Truth?"): truth is not a package we can "have" to take home; truth is a path on which we are invited to travel. You can't wrap up the light in a package; but you can walk in the light. Where then does a

ogma come in? It's a signpost on the path of truth -- nothing more, but nothing less either. If we remember how much it cost those searchers after truth who came before us to erect these signposts, we will be grateful for them. Of course, signposts are merely pointers; they are not the way, let alone the goal. We must go beyond them; but should we therefore knock them down? And since all are invited to travel the path of truth, these signposts must be maintained accessible to all. Our concern for truth demands this. However, in order to understand signposts, one must learn to read.

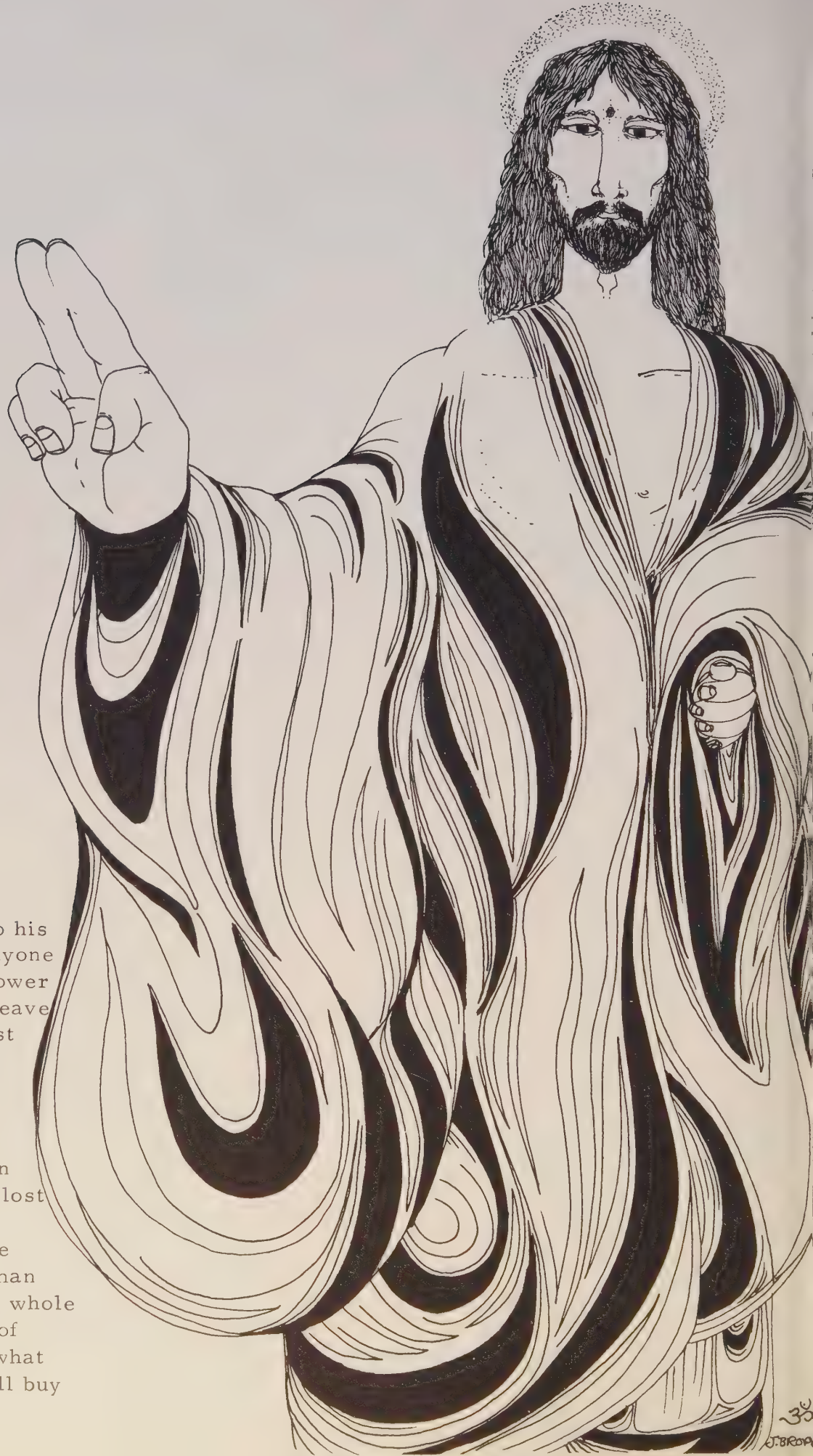
Reading the signposts isn't easy, whether they are dogmas or Koans, passages from the Bible, from the Vedas or from any other sacred tradition. One has to learn the language of that particular tradition. Moreover, this language changes in the course of time, so that a truth has to be restated in contemporary language when its expression has become obsolete. This holds for any truth expressed in words. Words change their meaning. To get at the truth, we must make every effort to understand what the one who used these words really wanted to say at the time. The longer ago this was, the greater our difficulties today. Yet, difficult or not, every statement of truth has to be seen in its context, otherwise it becomes deceptive. Our reverence for truth demands from us the effort to read its expressions in context.

Apart from the context of a particular passage, a given language as a whole must be seen in its own unique overall context. This general context accounts for what we might call the characteristic perspective, say, of Vedanta or of the Biblical tradition. A given perspective always allows us to see certain things more clearly than others; and the perspective of this or that tradition allows us to express certain aspects of

truth more clearly than others. Since no perspective gives you 360 degree vision, the language of no single tradition is likely to allow for perfect expression. Two languages might, if we are lucky, complement each other, as two pictures taken in different perspectives complement each other, or two kinds of food together bring out one another's finest flavor. It is in this sense that one might find in Vedanta a kind of key to understanding Christianity -- and vice versa too, we may hope.

Christianity turns many deeply religious people off (or never turned them on) because it seems so dualistic: the Creator up there, we down here -- and a big gap between us. This simply doesn't express the truth of our genuine religious experience: an experience of communion, of being "together" -- with ourselves, with one another, with God. Of course, we must distinguish between the Christian message, which is "the Good News", and Christianity as the general context in which this message reaches us. But this distinction makes the paradox still more striking. The Good News is precisely that there is no more gap, because "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself" (2 Cor. 5:19), and everything is irresistibly on the move towards the final fulfillment when "God will be all in all" (1 Cor. 15:28). Yet, this Good News is preached in a language that tends to push the distinction between God and world to the point where distinction becomes separation; at this point the language itself becomes hopelessly dualistic. How can we maintain the necessary distinction without falling into dualism? Is it here, maybe, that Vedanta can help us?

Vedanta, at its best, truly gives expression to that awareness of universal communion which is so basic to our religious experience: in the very act of knowing God, it is He, the unknown Knower, who knows in us; He is our



Jesus then said to his disciples: "If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind; he must take up his cross and come with me. Whoever cares for his own safety is lost; but if a man will let himself be lost for my sake, he will find his true self. What will a man gain by winning the whole world, at the cost of his true self? Or what can he give that will buy that self back?"

Innermost Self, the true Self of all
elves. But here again an exclusive
perspective tends to lead to distort-
ion; here too, the inherent limita-
tions of language make themselves
felt. We can truly say, "I know that
I am He", but in saying so, how can
we make sure we maintain the nec-
essary distinction while affirming
non-duality? "I know that I am He"
means: Whatever is real in me is
He. But, honestly now, isn't there
something in me that's unreal? The mo-
ment we overlook this fact, non-
dualism collapses into monism. But
monism leaves no room for devotion
as an integral part of our religious
experience; it cannot account for
that deeply religious sense of re-
sponsibility in which our ethical life
finds its roots; gratitude, the root
of all religion, loses its meaning in
a strictly monistic perspective.

Where does this leave us? Neither
dualism nor monism does justice to
our peak experiences, to our mysti-
cal moments with their flashes of
awareness in which consummate
union and total incommensurability
paradoxically coincide. There is
an inner contradiction between the
mystic who says, "I know that I am
He" and the mystic who hears the
Word saying, "I am the One who is;
you are the one who is not." The
apparent contradiction arises from
the limitations of language and per-
spective. You can only say one thing
at a time; you have to choose your
point of view. But the experience
of the mystics (and our own deepest
experience) reveals that the opposites
coincide in God. Are we, then, to
discard the Christian Good News on
account of Christianity's tendency
towards dualistic expression? Or
could we discard the deep insights
of Vedanta on account of its tendency
towards monistic expression?

Why not let the two ways of ex-
pression counterbalance one another?
Why not accept both perspectives and
allow them to correct one another?
Religious experience remains the

touchstone for religious doctrine.
And our religious experience, where
it is most genuine, brings home to us
both our oneness with God and our
spontaneous gratitude for this gift.
We can and must affirm both, affirm
them by a life that remains grateful
because it remains realistic. The
moment we face reality realistically,
we realize that it is a "given reality",
as we say. After all, we didn't make
it; we didn't earn it; we didn't even
choose it. If it is a "given", it is a
gift, and the most realistic response
in this case is the most religious one,
namely thankfulness. In that deep
gratitude which is an essential char-
acteristic of our peak moments, we
experience both in one: limitless
giftedness and limitless dependence.
If there is one common denominator
to all the spiritual paths, it is that
grateful living in which both aspects
are realized.

Swamiji rightly says that all paths
of all religions lead to the one truth.
It strains our imagination, but we
must even say that taking one path
means taking all of them: they are
all contained in each. Yet this will
help us not in the least until we set
out to make one path our own and
follow it. I can't quite understand
why this is so, but it rarely fails:
if you tell someone there are many
roads leading to the one goal, you
should expect him joyfully to set
out on it-doesn't-matter-which one.
Instead, you know what happens: he
sits down. He plays off one road
against the other. He can't make up
his mind. -- It's true that there are
many paths; but for you there is only
one here and now, the one on which
you are already standing. There is
only one place where you can start,
obviously: where you are. Yet, this
seems too simple, and we always
want to start where we are not.

To really follow out the lead which
Vedanta gives us for a deeper under-
standing of Christian teaching, we
must begin to live what Christ teaches.
How else should we understand its
meaning? And what does he teach?

The very paradox which concerns us here. With regard to himself: "Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone" (Mk:10:18); "The Father is greater than I" (Jn. 14:28). And yet: "I and the Father are one" (Jn. 10:30); "He who sees me, sees the Father" (Jn. 14:9). And with regard to all of us, he says that the Kingdom of God, our ultimate joy and salvation, is here -- a totally gratuitous gift, the discovery of a treasure for which we didn't even look; a pot of gold hit by the plough in our own field. "The Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Lk. 17:20). And yet it is like a pearl from far distant shores, so precious that it costs "no less than everything" (that's T.S. Eliot's expression). We can't escape the paradox: "Work out your salvation with fear and trembling!" and in the same breath: "for it is God who is at work within you..."

(Phi. 2:12). In whatever tradition we may walk, life in the Spirit means acceptance of this paradox. For the opposites coincide in God.

This leads, in fact, to the very heart of the Christian message, and to the question: who is Jesus Christ. We might explore this question together some other time, -- explore it by thinking about it, I mean. To do the truth in love, each one of us in the way which is our version of the Way -- this is already an exploration of this question, a living, loving experience.

OM SHANTHI
Your brother David

Brother David Steindl-Rast is a Benedictine Monk of Mount Saviour Monastery in Pine City, N.Y. He is Co-Founder and Chairman, with Swami Satchidananda, of the Center for Spiritual Studies.

ADMISSION

I shall miss the brief twilight and the grey
Quiet morning, I think, once we've begun
Unending glory, everlasting day.
Apocalyptic analogues of sun
Argue for shadow (small as a man's hand)
To modulate the brilliance and discern
Each dozen dozen thousand candid band
Signed and still singing while the heavens burn.
The registration isn't quite complete,
For laggards like me hang about the gate;
There's all eternity to get a seat,
There really isn't any time to wait
Until the Lamb unseals his special book
And grants the hesitant a human look.

Mary Anthony Weinig, S.M.C.J.

REFLECTIONS ON PRAYER

Adapted from a talk by Swami Satchidananda

It takes a long time to learn how to pray just for the sake of praying and not for anything else, not for our own selfish desires. The reason that we obtain no satisfaction from our prayers is that they are not really sincere attempts to touch God. When we begin to go deeper -- to seek God and nothing else -- then we will be satisfied in our prayers. Then God will come.

I realize that there are a number of people who do not believe in a God who is "sitting somewhere waiting for us". "What is this God?", they ask me. "Is He going to come running just because I cry?"

I do not believe in such a God either. I think that God is everywhere and He has no name or form -- no limitations like that. He is Consciousness Itself.

In that case you might ask, "Then what is the purpose of prayer? How can you say God is going to hear our prayers and answer them?" I answer you that God is all-present, all-knowing. He is not bound by any particular form but is an all-pervasive awareness or power. And by your concentrated, sincere and unselfish prayer, you are tuning your mental radio to receive that power.

I can tell you that there is beautiful music in the room where you are now. Some of you will agree and some of you will not agree. Those who deny it will say, "We don't hear any music now -- how can you say that there is music in this room?" To you I say, "Bring a radio. Plug it in. Tune it. You will get the music."

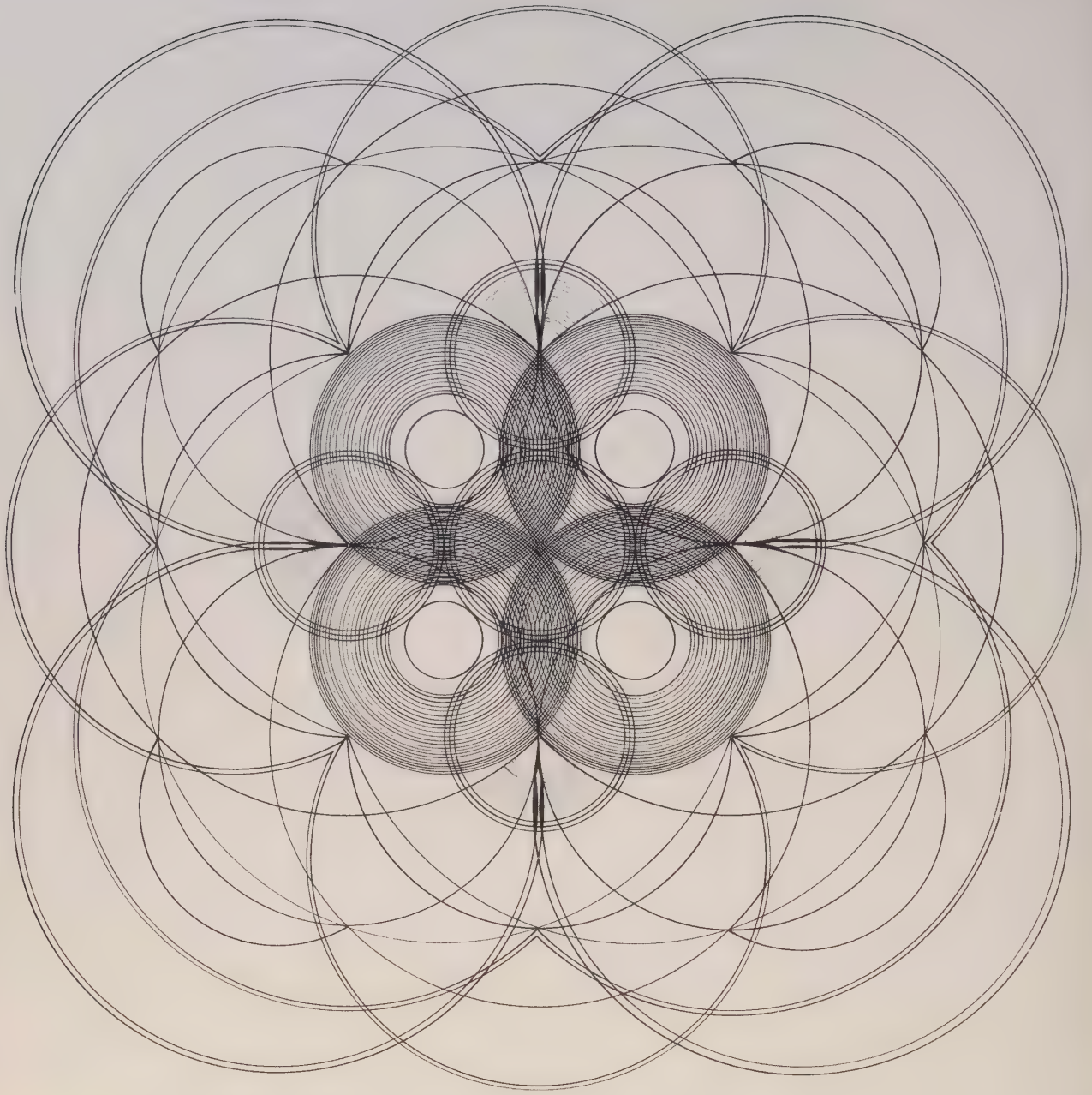
By tuning the radio you are not creating the music. The music was already there; your tuning simply attracted the radio waves. If your tuning isn't correct, you won't hear a

thing. In the same way, God's Grace, God-Consciousness, or the Cosmic Power, will be attracted only when you tune your mind to the proper wave length.

Some people say they tune in through meditation; others say they tune in through prayer. In either case they are doing essentially the same thing. Meditation means to focus the mind wholly on one thing. Real prayer means to meditate on the conversation, the giving and receiving, between you and God. An unmeditated prayer, without full concentration, will not be very powerful, and it is not surprising if such a prayer brings no satisfaction. There has to be proper attunement; the mind should be one-pointed, focused, and free from selfish motives.

Some people say that it is unnecessary to do anything but sit quietly in order to get into that higher state, Satori or Samadhi. When you can make the mind and body quiet, you are attuning yourself -- "at-one-ing" yourself -- to that state which is always there waiting for you. Through your discipline and effort in meditation you are being cleared and opened up to receive that true essential channel within you. In other words, you are not doing anything to create that state, but you must do something in order not to disturb the flow of it. You must remove the "interference", decrease the "static" which constantly bombards us through the senses, and learn to control the ego-thoughts so that they do not enslave you and block your attunement and "at-one-ment" with God's grace.

That is what we do in the name of Yoga, in the name of prayer, meditation or whatever you want to call it.




the practice of concentration

Dharana, the concentration of the whole of one's psychic being, is at the heart of the practice of Yoga. A continual flow of Dharana is called Dhyana, or meditation. If you think of concentration as a drop of water, then meditation is the river.

The way in which one concentrates one's mind is determined to some extent by what kind of person one is and what samskaras, or psychic impressions, are within oneself. The

nature of the chosen object of concentration is also a clue to one's inner make-up. When the student enters into Dharana, he can know something of his personal structure. He becomes both the observer of himself and the object of his study.

Concentration is the channeling of the inner psychic structure towards the universality of Being. The goal is achieved by passing through many stages, with a graduated movement




of the finite toward the infinite. It need not be emphasized that one should be capable of practicing sense control. One cannot crave the things of the world and the beatitude of Yoga also. Many students desire to practice concentration. If they are asked 'why', they have no good reply. There should be clarity first, for it is an index of conviction and sincerity. Again, treading the path of Yoga always implies some loss in the eyes of the sense-world. We see the world outside and we always think of it, because we tend to see it as the ultimate reality. Then the thought of the world cannot be set aside because "reality" cannot be ignored. As long as the external world is considered to be the sole reality, any attempt to bring about internal concentration in the mind is doomed to failure. The student should decide what he wants. Does he want fame, comfort, praise, etc., or is he honest in pursuing the way of concentration of mind and Realization?

The attempt at Yoga can be shaken up in the earlier stages through such pressures as heat, cold, hunger and the need for a proper place to live. There should be no other burning necessity for a student, for his practice involves an attempt to minimize desires. When one takes to Yoga, one must be honest with it. There is no fooling around with Yoga or experimenting with it to see if some sort of miracle comes out of it. The entire being of a student goes into Yoga, and not merely a part of his personality. Therefore, self-analysis is of paramount importance; the student himself must honestly examine his motives.

It is often pointed out that worry and grief constitute an obstacle in

the practice of Yoga. Unfortunately, life is always beset with sorrow and if we are to search for a human being free from vexation of any kind, we would perhaps not find even one. Yet Yoga cannot be successful if mental stress is to pursue a person like a hound, wherever he goes. A great amount of effort is necessary on the path to keep the mind in balance; for balance is said to be Yoga. It is only when the balance is upset due to some factor in life that worry sets in. Hence, the first step in Yoga is not concentration or meditation, but a psychological disentanglement, a "stock-taking" as people do in business, and a striking of the balance sheet of the inner world. One has to find out where one stands. How can one do concentration or meditation if pains are to eat into one's vitals? Or supposing that the student is deeply annoyed with someone, will he be able to sit for concentration at that time? No; the mind is already engaged in something else, and is not prepared for concentration. It has already been given some work and it is trying to reconcile itself with negative conditions that have been thrust upon it.

Yoga is a positive state, different from all the moods of the day. There is nothing of the negative in the Yoga way of life, neither in one's internal perceptions or external perceptions. Misgivings about Yoga are due to a lack of proper understanding of its meaning. All anguish is to be set right. How to do this is a personal problem and the answer varies from one individual to another. Each question has to be taken separately, seen in its proper perspective, and solved. Many of our difficulties arise not from out-





side conditions but from our own way of thinking. We expect certain events to occur and they do not. What are we then to do? Are we to change the world? If we try to change external conditions, we often become the victims of disappointment. And the reason for this is that the world is not wholly outside us. Indeed, what we refer to as the world, is largely a product of our perception of it. If we cannot adjust the world to ourselves, we must learn to adjust ourselves to the world.

First of all, we have to learn to live; otherwise we will be the losers and nobody will hear our cries. This is the way of self-analysis, whereby the student learns to understand his current condition. The analysis of bodily and social relations should be carried further into mental and spiritual questions, for only then can there be meditation and concentration of mind. There should be contentment with the creation of God. Here the student is truly pleased (Thy Will be done), and this pleasure is itself an act of concentration. Since concentration of mind has so much to do with inner satisfaction, there cannot be concentration of mind when there is unhappiness. An unhappy man cannot be a student of Yoga. We do not go to Yoga because people do not want us in the world, but because there is something substantial and positive in Yoga.

Psychological contentment brought about by self-analysis is a great help in concentration. When one is affected by thoughts pertaining to things or conditions opposed to the aim of Yoga, Patanjali recommends thinking or feeling the

opposite, thereby affirming the ultimate reality of our goal. If a particular sense organ is troubling the student, he gives intense work to the other organs so that the energy will be drawn by them, and the troublesome element is divested of its strength. When one is prone to be angry, one might think of the Buddha, his calm personality -- poised, kind, affectionate and unagitated by events taking place outside. The impulse would then slowly wane because of the higher and ultimately more attractive thought occurring to the mind through continued contemplation. Of course, when anger overpowers the mind, higher thoughts would not come to it naturally. But a daily practice will create in the mind samskaras, or impressions, which will in the course of time deprive such negative thoughts of the power and vehemence which would disturb internal peace. This is the method of "substitution" in psychoanalysis.

The three methods which the mind employs to rid itself of unwanted thoughts are repression, substitution and sublimation. Sublimation, the redirecting of the energy of an impulse from its primitive source for a healthier, more positive use, is the most desirable course to adopt, but not the easiest. On the other hand, repression is no remedy at all. People repress desires into the subconscious due to social taboos. When a person cannot fulfill his desires, he swallows them; in the long run, they become complexes which may lead to various illnesses. People's moods are nothing but occasional eruptions of repressed emotions and attitudes. Patanjali suggests





STILLNESS -- Bhikkhu Khantipalo

the golden Buddha does not go
anywhere
He sits in peace undying
dynamically
Intent upon the wonderful
within

around Him whirls the world
everywhere
Mortal men are born, whirl on
to die
Unquiet, their senses are
without

Not coming and not going
Reality
The golden Buddha, glorious
Within
When shall I
be not
That He shall come
to be?



substitution as a middle course leading to sublimation by Yoga.

The point of concentration may be external, internal or universal. The student may think on an object, or he may think on an idea. Outer thinking may be regarded as the beginning stage, inner thinking as the middle stage, and thinking of the universal as the last stage. One begins with the outer, goes to the inner, and reaches the universal.

Therefore, in the beginning the point of concentration has to be external, for the mind always has a tendency to go outward. But this need not mean going senseward. We may give the mind some freedom of course, but the area of the mind's activity should gradually become smaller and smaller as it rises to higher and higher levels of concentration. When so much energy leaks out through the channels of the senses, it is no wonder that people complain that the mind is weak and that the will lacks strength. This is why so much emphasis is laid on the control of the senses. The mind which conserves energy in itself becomes more powerful than it appeared earlier.

Concentration does not come suddenly in spite of all efforts on the part of a student. The mind has been habituated to think in terms of diversity. To turn it away from multitudinousness and to bring it to a point is not an easy task. The mind does not accept it. In the beginning there is repulsion, and later on there arises difficulty in the practice of concentration. But if the practice goes on with proper self-analysis and understanding, the mind will be able to appreciate what

it is for and what it is expected to do.

Before making preparations for chalking out a daily program for Sadhana (spiritual practices) one should try to be methodical and logical in one's thinking. Any unintelligent activity is not easily taken in by the mind, for the mind will not accept chaotic ideas. One should not hastily jump into something; as many aspects of the situation as possible should be taken into consideration. A program that has to change everyday is not a well thought-out program. Logical thinking is therefore a help in bringing about concentration in the mind. The test of logicity in thought is that one feels a delight the moment one arranges one's thoughts in a method. One feels a comfort within because of the completeness introduced by a system of logic in the mind. Logicity is a form of psychological perfection, and all perfection is joy.

Merely because one has heard a lecture on Yoga, does not mean that one has a clear path set before oneself. On the practical side there is still the fundamental difficulty of choosing a proper method of practice and coming to facts, not merely doctrines. Inasmuch as every mind is special in its constitution, proclivities and temperament, certain details peculiar to one's mind have to be thought out clearly in advance. Different roads may lead to the same destination, but each road has rules of traffic and movement peculiar to its construction. Ultimately, it does not matter what one's path is, but one must stick to the rules of the path.

Swami Krishnananda





Only one thing is important,
whether we are brave or
cowardly: to be always there
where God will have us,
and for the rest to
trust Him.

There is no other remedy against
fear but to abandon ourselves to
His Will.

BERNANOS
†



The Universality of the Bhagavad Gita.

When there is such a wealth and variety of Hindu scriptures, why is it that the Bhagavad Gita is by far the best loved and most widely read, both in India and abroad? It has become the regular thing for religious and intellectual leaders in India to write commentaries on it, and its translations are innumerable, while other Hindu texts lie more or less neglected.

Perhaps it is because it has a peculiar quality of universality. The teaching of Sri Krishna, who proclaimed it, covers all four of the traditional paths to beatitude: that of knowledge, of action, of devotion and of yoga (meditation). Also, Arjuna, to whom it was taught, was a very ordinary and representative aspirant. In contrast, the Yoga Vasistha is teaching given to Rama, a youth of rare

intelligence and sensitivity who, while still in his teens, had perceived the unsatisfactory and illusory nature of the phenomenal world. Unlike him, Arjuna was a married man who lived an active life and enjoyed it, but now found himself faced with a particularly distasteful task. Far more readers will be able to imagine themselves in his place, or share in his difficulties.

He has reached the point where he wonders whether the game is worth the candle. Should he carry on with his struggle for victory, wealth and power (involving defeat and loss for others) or should he renounce it all and lead a life of meditation?

Neither, Krishna tells him. He is to carry on and face his destiny precisely because it is his--not for the sake of victory but because this is

where he finds himself placed; this is his dharma, the ground on which he is already standing. "Better one's own dharma, however unsuccessful, than that of another, though well performed. One does no wrong in following the line of action true to one's nature." And doing so was to be his form of spiritual Sadhana or training.

Krishna does indeed teach Arjuna the ultimate doctrine of Advaita. (The doctrine of Advaita holds that behind the perishable phenomena of the world, behind the passing names and forms, all Reality is finally One, because it is all a manifestation of the same Source. -- Ed. note) In fact, Krishna begins by doing so in the first part of Chapter II, culminating in the stupendously simple verse: "There is no existence of the unreal, and no non-existence of the Real." But having done so, he says: "This is the theory; now listen to what you have got to do about it." And in laying down what is to be done he does not burden Arjuna with a whole network of commands and prohibitions; he points directly to the heart of the matter, the spirit in which, or the motive for which, he is to act. "Your concern is only with your duty, never with the gain from action; but don't cling to inaction either."

In the immediate context, Arjuna's cousin was trying to usurp the throne of his brother; but the point was that whether it concerned him personally or not, he was to resist evil because it was evil. Right is to be upheld because it is right, and wrong resisted because it is wrong, regardless of whether one's personal interests will be furthered or impaired by doing so.

This might seem a rather cold incentive to right living, but as though to balance it, the Gita constantly prescribes devotion. "Those who worship Me, renouncing all actions in Me, regarding Me as the Supreme Goal, meditating on Me with single-minded devotion, I speedily save from the ocean of samsara (mundane existence with all its sorrows)." And then, as happens so often in the Gita, a concession is made for those who find it too hard: "If you cannot even practice constant dedication, at least concentrate on performing actions for My sake. Even by that you will attain the Goal." And for those who find even this too strenuous there still remains disinterested activity. "If you can't even do this, then, taking refuge in Me, perform all actions with self-control, not for the sake of the benefits they may bring."

Even though the aspirant, in the person of Arjuna, is constantly urged to aim for the highest, there is a benevolent tolerance for those who aim lower. "By whatever way men approach Me, by that way do I come to them. All paths that men follow lead to Me." The meaning goes much deeper than mere religious tolerance; it implies that all beings are following their destiny and thereby returning ineluctably to their Source. There are various goals, various degrees of achievement short of the supreme achievement of return to the Absolute to which Arjuna is being urged. Each aspirant achieves what he understands and works for; each will reach the

goal to which he sets his compass. "Worshippers of the gods go to the gods, worshippers of the ancestors go to the ancestors, of the spirits to the spirits; My worshippers come to Me." The "Me" here does not mean a limited god contrasted with other gods; it means the Universal Self. In fact, Krishna says explicitly: "I am the Self in the heart of all beings."

Supreme Advaitic knowledge is constantly implied, sometimes openly expressed, in the Gita, nowhere more trenchantly than in the verse already quoted--that there is no being of the unreal and no not-being of the Real. Also, it has the highest praise for it: "There is nothing in the world so purifying as Knowledge." Nevertheless, it does not primarily expound the path of Knowledge. (The path of Knowledge here refers to the method of Self-Inquiry in which the aspirant progresses spiritually by constantly asking "Who am I?" Thus he comes to discriminate between what is Real and what is unreal, between what is the essence and what is the impermanent. -- Ed. note) When, in Chapter II, Sri Krishna first expounds the non-duality of Advaita, and then tells Arjuna to follow in practice the path of disinterested activity, that is enough to confuse the "plain, blunt man" that Arjuna is. He starts Chapter III by complaining: "If you think that Knowledge is better than action, why do you urge me to this dreadful action? You have got me all confused with this double talk of yours. Please tell me which one is the way for me to go to attain the supreme goal." And note, in parentheses, that it is no longer a question of which decision would

make life easier, but which decision would provide the path (characteristically, he says "the one path") to Liberation. Krishna does not answer; he says that the path varies according to a man's temperament.

It is necessary to distinguish between the doctrinal understanding from which a man starts, and the type of path he follows. For the path of Knowledge, full doctrinal understanding of Advaita is necessary; for a path of Karma Yoga (selfless meditative work) or Bhakti Yoga (faith, love and devotion) less complete understanding could serve. The Bhagavad Gita gives full doctrinal understanding (one more sign of its benevolence, giving ever more than is necessary); but the path it lays down is a combination of Karma and Bhakti.

All selfish action asserts the reality of the ego, the individual self, and therefore Arjuna is constantly exhorted to avoid this. There is a modern ideal of altruistic activity, but that is far from being a means of purification, since it can imply setting oneself up as a sort of providence or benefactor for others. Arjuna is taught disinterested service, a far purer discipline: doing one's duty because it is one's duty, because it is the ground that the aspirant is already standing on here and now--with no thought for gain or loss. And it is with devotion that this is to be combined. This is the task.

Bhagvan Das

reprinted from THE MOUNTAIN PATH
January, 1968:
Vol. V, No. 1



Pale shimmering sheets
of silver rain
draining the heavens.
Flower food.
Twilight pools of
captured stars and old rainbows
give the momentary
expectation
of croaking frogs
and lotus blossoms

chaitanya

the MASTER'S VOICE



Yoga seems to place a heavy emphasis on discipline. Doesn't this interfere with the spontaneity which is necessary to get the most out of our lives?

Many people say that they do not want discipline; they just want what they think is freedom. But by disciplining our lives, we should not imagine that we are becoming slaves. On the contrary, we are becoming masters. Are we forever to be at the mercy of each passing impulse, desire and whim?

How can you wholly open yourself up to the flow of life, to the fullness of the present moment, if you do not have enough control of the mind to fully focus it in the present moment, because it is used to running wherever it wants? Swami Sivanandaji used to say, "Control the thoughts of the mind. Do not allow them to dominate you. Become the master of them."

To control the thoughts of the mind you must keep it pure and clear. To keep the mind clear, keep the senses clear. To keep the senses clear, keep the body clear. Once you have purity and control you are the master of any situation, because you are in touch with your true self. If your body, senses and mind are well disciplined, you can use them for any purpose.



When I think about my present situation, it is so easy to become depressed.

Every event in life has a profound significance. Every experience whether pleasant or painful, expected or unexpected, has a purpose. Behind the surface value of an encounter there is always a spiritual meaning. All the components of your personality, the forces at play in your life, the circumstances in which you are placed, are based upon the fact that all life moves towards its consummation in the ultimate unity of existence, the unity of "I am". It all returns to God, the Source of Being.

It is true that we cannot alter the circumstances of our existence as we may think we would like to have them; we cannot control the course of events in our own lives or in the lives of others. Thank God for that! We have to realize the limitations of the judgements of the ego.

We are not the result of accident or coincidence. Simply because the ego, from its biased and finite perspective, cannot fathom the workings of the Universal Intelligence of God, there is no reason for pessimism or despair.



It seems that the ego is our main enemy, or obstacle, on the spiritual path. What is this ego?

The ego is the "I" thought. "I" is the basis, the foundation, of the mind.

The mind is a heap of thoughts -- we can imagine it as a big ball -- and this is what manifests itself as the "I". "I" holds all these thoughts; every thought comes from that ball.

All your thoughts are based on the ego. Pleasure, pain, passion, anger, desire: all are different vibrations or modifications of the mind. But your true "I", the real identity, is something wholly other than this. That we call the Self, the Atman, the Soul. What is the real divine spark in you, the image of God? That image is the pure Self, but it is not always visible because of the tangle of thoughts in front of it. The light from that spark has then to pass through the thoughts which color it, preventing us from perceiving it purely. It is something like a light bulb encased in a shade. With a blue shade over the light, everything you see will appear blue. With a spotted and multi-colored shade, everything will appear spotted and multi-colored. The light doesn't appear to you in its natural state because of the condition of the shade. And yet the same clear light shines inside.


The shade is your ego, and all the colors on it are your thoughts. If you learn to still the mind, you remove the colors from the shade and it becomes pure and clear like glass; you will naturally perceive the real light for there will be nothing in the way to distort it. Our entire purpose then is to clear the mind, to open it out, to let the sun shine.








What is the necessity of giving up the world altogether?
It is enough to give up the attachment to it.
Ramakrishna.



parable of the silk worm



The essence of civilization consists not in the multiplication of wants, but in their deliberate and voluntary renunciation.

Mahatma Gandhi

I once decided to try an experiment with silk moths which taught me a very good lesson. I started with very small eggs. When they hatched they were so thin, only half the size of a hair. Within one square inch I had at least five hundred silk worms, they're that small. However, they continued to grow until I soon needed a whole room for them. Each one became several inches long, because day and night they fed on mulberry leaves.

Originally I had supposed it was just a simple affair: to bring them a few leaves. But the second day I had to bring a basketful of leaves, then a few sacks. By the fourth day

I had to ask all my friends to gather cartloads of leaves. All night you could hear the worms, continually eating, making terrible noises.

For thirty days they ate and ate and ate. At last they became thoroughly exhausted and unable to move. But after eating so much they couldn't sleep very well, no -- maybe they were dreaming -- and they could be seen constantly rolling about. As they rolled, saliva came out of their mouths just as with children who lie down and wet their pillows after overeating. So as the moths continued to roll, their saliva became increasingly thick like string. The string began



to wrap around them as they continued rolling until the wrapping had formed a cocoon, totally enclosing them. Then they became motionless as if lost in sleep. But finally there came the day when I could hear them slowly chipping away at the cocoons from the inside. At last the shells opened and out came butterflies, beautiful winged butterflies. Slowly they emerged and looked back at the cocoons, and I could imagine them thinking and laughing at that moment, "Oh you terrible fetter, my self-made prison. Thank God I am free of you and can fly away."

And that reminded me of people who also "eat" day and night. I am not just referring to those who overeat through the mouth; I also mean those who stuff themselves through the eyes, the ears, the sense of touch, the feelings, the emotions. They employ the entire physical body and all the mental energy to gorge themselves on every kind of "food". They become unable to stop for they are never satisfied. No, the more they get, the more they want. In the pursuit of pleasure, they seek to possess more and more -- not only objects but people also. Soon it can be seen that all this accumulation has had some unanticipated side effects, such as physical, mental and emotional disabilities; these collectors have begun to collect more than they bargained for. Exhausted and discouraged, they lie down with the realization that the cumulative effect of all this accumulation has been enslavement for them. "I'm worried. I'm confused. I'm troubled, tired. "Why?", they wonder. "What happened? What brought things to this state of

affairs? Why should I be bound by this? What is the cause? ... Did somebody bind me? No, I started holding on to as much as I could. Everything and everyone that came my way I took possession of. Now I find myself to be a complete captive. So what am I to do? ... I will renounce my attachment to all those things and be free."

So arises this thinking, this discrimination, and out of discrimination comes dispassion, non-attachment -- Viveka and Vairagya -- accomplished by a keen mind and a powerful will. A dynamic will backed up by discrimination and voluntary renunciation cuts open that cocoon, that self-made cocoon. When these butterflies emerge, they behold the one wing Viveka, the other wing, Vairagya. With these they can look back at their own past and almost laugh at it. "Oh Maya, oh illusion. I'll never be imprisoned with you again."

We are all butterflies; some just eating; some in cocoons; some of us are scratching to come out -- all of us in different stages, like the silk moths. Each one has to stop and think, "Where am I? Am I still eating mulberry leaves, still accumulating? Am I just making the cocoon? Am I asleep inside of it, or do I want to begin to break out?"

Each one has to question himself and realize.

(adapted from a talk
by Swami Satchidananda)



A DOCTOR'S VIEW

As a result of the article on Yoga and Western medicine which appeared in Ray 17, I received a number of general questions. These mainly concerned three topics: the Yoga postures, diet, and the role of medication in health. At first I planned to discuss the three topics independently. More simply taken, however, the Yoga asanas, diet and medicine are interdependent. It might therefore be fruitful, at least in our first encounter with these topics, to deal with them together.

Concerning medicines: many people seem to feel that they do more harm than good. Some ask whether they are, in fact, necessary at all. Frankly, in my experience as an internist, medicines do have the capability of doing more harm than good. However, used in the proper place and at the proper moment, they are absolutely essential. It is only their indiscriminate use that leads to harm through various side effects. There are many illnesses, such as meningitis and the rapidly fatal bacterial pneumonias where the body can benefit greatly from the help of medications. Before the advent of penicillin, spinal meningitis of the bacterial type was universally fatal. Now that man has discovered penicillin, we can in fact save most of those patients who formerly would have died. Penicillin, by the way, should not be thought of as a foreign substance; it is a derivative of a fungus or plant-like matter and was originally discovered free-growing in nature. As such, it can be thought of as organic or natural.

Ideally, the administration of antibiotics to treat acute bacterial illnesses, or of other medications to control severe high blood pressure or various heart disorders, should not be done in an isolated manner. In all these conditions we hope to change a person's diet and encourage exercise, Yoga asanas and Yoga breathing techniques. Diet, for instance, is of great value in the control of gout, ulcers, high blood pressure and heart disease. Giving medication for acute illness allows us to preserve the patient's life in order that he may reappraise his life style and hopefully begin to utilize more healthful techniques such as diet and exercise. Unfortunately, some doctors do give medications indiscriminately and we frequently wind up treating the damage or side effects of the medications. Certain drugs, I feel, should not be allowed on the market at all, and I would not prescribe them myself.

Properly understood, medicines definitely do more good than harm; medicines used indiscriminately definitely do more harm than good.

With regard to nutrition: I believe very strongly in the values of a vegetarian diet. Firstly, the diet of most vegetarians is extremely low in cholesterol which, as you might know, is directly related to heart disease, blood vessel disease and hypertension. If the average American would eliminate eggs alone from his diet, he would thereby diminish his cholesterol intake by 50%. If, in addition, one abstains from meat, his cholesterol intake is reduced another 30% since saturated animal fats are not present in his diet.

There are other potentially harmful substances in meat. Certain animals are given hormones to make them grow fatter and more tender, more quickly. These hormones are ingested by the people who eat these animals; meanwhile their effect and activity in our bodies is not truly known (especially over a long period). Even without the exogenous delivery of these hormones into the animals, when the animals are brought into the slaughter-house they go into such a state of terror and fright that their own endogenous discharge is thrown into complete turmoil. All of the sympathetic hormones associated with the animals' terror and fright are likewise ingested by meat-eaters.

Another consideration is that many animals are routinely given antibiotics during their growing period, to help cut down on infection and to help them grow more rapidly. The consequence is that these antibiotics are also ingested by us, again unwittingly, and have their own subtle effects on the body. This can, for instance, sensitize us so that in time of real need one may indeed be already allergic to the antibiotic in question -- never having received it from a doctor, only having received it through meats.

In many cases, large outbreaks of food poisoning can be traced to contaminated meat. Salmonella and clostridia, two of the more common causes of food poisoning in this country, are often found in our fowl and meat. And then there are the many parasitic diseases transmitted from animals to humans.

On the other hand, the vegetarian diet offers a simple,

tasty, well-balanced diet, rich in vitamins and minerals and lacking the toxic substances which are found in meats. To be sure, there is the problem of pesticide sprays being used on vegetables and fruits. However, if care is taken, these can be adequately scraped and washed off. The benefits of a vegetarian diet can not only be seen and felt physically, but mentally a definite alertness lightness and sensitivity of the mind occurs also.

If most meat-eaters were forced to slaughter animals themselves, I believe that the majority of them would become vegetarians, seeing the intense suffering that the poor animals undergo. I do not wish to make it sound as if I am totally condemning the eating of meat. Obviously there are many areas of the world where it would be impossible to grow or obtain vegetables; in these places one eats meat of necessity. I do believe, however, that in those areas of the world where meats can readily be eliminated from the diet, a healthier mind and body result.

One of the commonest objections that I hear to the vegetarian diet is that it does not provide enough protein. This is not so. Grains, nuts and cheeses are extremely good sources of protein. And the classic example is the soybean which, pound for pound, has four to five times the amount of protein that steak has.

Concerning the asanas, or Yoga postures, the questions generally fall into two types: can the asanas help to prevent disease? And do they have mental as well as physical benefits? The answer to both questions is unequivocally yes. The Yoga asanas constitute a scientifically devised system developed over



*What shall I be?
I have again and again grown like grass,
I have experienced seventy times seven molds.
I died from minerality and became vegetable,
and from vegetativeness I passed away and became animal.
I died from animality and became man.
Then why fear disappearance through death?
Next time I shall die
bringing forth wings and feathers like angels.
After that, soaring higher than angels,
What you cannot imagine --
I shall be that.*

Rumi

thousands of years. They work on all areas of the human body and on all the internal organs. Their effect in stimulating circulation to the various muscles, glands and organs has been well-documented medically. In addition, the way in which they are performed induces a contemplative state of mind, great relaxation and tranquility. The asanas themselves, without the student's awareness, lead automatically to a state of meditation. Both emotional and physical tension can be greatly alleviated by the daily practice of the postures.

I do not think that asanas are a substitute for physical exercise if you mean running, jumping, playing and participating in sports. Nor were they devised as such. The effects of the Yoga asanas are finer and more subtle than the effects of active physical exercise. In addition to maintaining a sound and healthy body and increasing resistance to disease states, the Yoga asanas soothe the body by inducing a calm and tranquil state of mind. Many physical and nervous ailments respond extremely well to the postures. I have personally seen patients with high blood pressure, ulcers and various nervous afflictions greatly relieved by the practice of the asanas. This is in contrast to forms of physical exercise such as baseball, basketball, football, all of which induce states of great excitement and do not soothe the mind or the body. They may get one's muscles into "shape", but the body is often bruised, sprained and broken; the emotions are

left in a state of unrest.

In conclusion, let me give a short example of how diet, asanas and medication can work together. A patient I saw several months ago entered the hospital with a very severe bacterial pneumonia, high blood pressure, and gout. He was treated immediately with antibiotics and his pneumonia was rapidly brought under control. He was instructed to eliminate meats from his diet because of the gout. He was then put on a low-salt diet for the high blood pressure and advised to practice Yoga postures at least once daily. The result of all this is that he feels better now than he ever did before. His blood pressure has returned to normal. His gout is under excellent control. His pneumonia has totally cleared up and has left him with no residual effects. Thus the medicine enabled us to save his life so that we could preserve it with proper diet and the practice of asanas. Because of this combination he can now lead a healthier, happier, more serene life.

This is Integral Yoga.

Howard Posner, M. D.
(Hari Haran)

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For questions relating to asanas, nutrition, medicine or any other aspects of a Yogic approach to health, readers are encouraged to write to Dr. Posner c/o Integral Yoga Magazine.

STRANGE SPIRIT...

adapted from the Yoga Vasistha



Sage Vasistha said:

"O Rama, in a certain forest I saw a very strange creature indeed -- a spirit with hundreds of hands and hundreds of feet. He had many heads and countless pairs of eyes. He was restless beyond belief. Through some of his heads he was laughing. At the same time, he was crying through his other heads. With many of his hands he was beating himself, while with his remaining hands he endeavored to save himself. In his ceaseless wandering he often fell into great pits in the ground and suffered intensely. Occasionally he would pause in plantain groves to enjoy some peace and contentment. But soon he would again begin his foolish movements, still beating himself and yet desperately trying to save himself at the same time.

Seeing him so ignorant and deluded, I went to catch hold of him. But he was wholly unwilling, full of struggle and resistance. Still I persevered with all my might, till at last he was caught, though he still continued to struggle. He wept and said: 'This is cruel. Why have you captured me? You will destroy me.'

Still I continued to hold him. And behold--his many legs began to disappear, his many arms began to fall away, his heads began to diminish in number. Finding him-

self so completely transformed, he laughed with inexpressible joy. All of his miseries were being overcome. He was so grateful.

There were many more such spirits in this forest as well. Some were subdued by me and released from their suffering. Many more still continue to resist in vain."

Rama asked:

"O Guru, where is that forest and who is such a spirit? Tell this to me."

Sage Vasistha explained:

"The world is a forest. Mind is the spirit. This mind has countless legs of imaginations, countless hands of thoughts, countless heads of desires. It is in constant discord with itself. While one part of the mind works in one direction, other parts of the mind are engaged in contrary activity. Various desires and thoughts war with each other and the conscious mind is ceaselessly battling the subconscious mind.

When I approached the mind through concentration, inquiry and meditation, he consistently attempted to escape. At first it is repulsive to the mind to be subject to discipline and thus there is weeping and rebellion. But as the complexes of the mind dissolve and desires are seen in their proper perspective, the mind is increasingly aware of the joy of Peace.

Many there are who have attained release illumined by me. Many still continue to roam the dark forest of the world-process, undoing that which they are eager to do; in their desire for bliss they form new chains of suffering.

Therefore, O Rama, realize your own mind to be such a spirit. Subdue it through meditation and inquiry. Enlighten it in the knowledge of the Self.

SATCHIDANANDA ASHRAM YOGAVILLE EAST * FROM DREAM TO REALITY

In India, the "ashram", spiritual community, is one of the basic tools for fostering spiritual development. The gathering together of spiritual aspirants under their preceptor to live, study and serve in an environment directed by him has always been a dynamic force for transforming the individual. When Swami Satchidananda and himself in New York surrounded by eager disciples practically demanding that he guide them for their growth, it was quite natural that the idea of an ashram arose. "What

boy," thought everyone, "to live with our beloved Swamiji, practicing his teachings in a quiet country place...." The devotees' blend of youthful enthusiasm and sincere aspiration generated a strong effort to raise funds and find the right location for such a venture. As early as 1967, we had even gone so far as to deposit \$1000 for a hotel in the Catskills. But shortly thereafter we realized that with the tremendous influx of New Yorkers to our classes, perhaps our first priority was a service organization was to open a

larger, permanent center in the city itself. The hotel offer was withdrawn and the next two years were spent obtaining funds and locating what is presently our main East Coast center at 227 West 13th St. in New York City.

That came to pass in 1970. So once again we turned our energy to fund-raising and



land research for the country property. The search for Satchidananda Ashram - Yogaville East took us to Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts and New York. Finally we tried Connecticut.

The place in Pomfret, Connecticut, seemed tailor-made for us:

Formerly a private estate and boarding



school, the 58-acre property contains a 3-story, 50 room stucco and brick building; a second building with a large meeting hall, and a third Japanese-style meditation house. The land itself is graced with fertile soil, two ponds, meadows and a waterfall that feeds a small network of streams which lace through 25 acres of woods. In addition, there are remains of a Roman-style outdoor courtyard, a walled-in greenhouse and rose garden complex.

The ashram is centrally located: 1 1/4 hours driving time from Boston, 40 minutes from Providence, 1 hour from Hartford, and 3 1/4 hours from Manhattan. A recent Karma Yoga weekend and a Washington's Birthday Retreat accomplished considerable cleaning, repairing, sanding and groundwork. The first Ashramites settled the land in March.

In the beginning, most of the community will need outside jobs. A few full-time Ashram workers will be primarily involved with Retreat planning, administration and maintenance. Slowly, more and more Ashramites will join in the daily on-the-grounds Karma Yoga. Sewing, printing, baking and gardening are among the cottage industries presently planned. Then too, as summer approaches, we plan to be drawing more on our own energies to receive a constantly increasing number of guests and visitors. One project which we feel particularly close to is the Integral Yoga School for Children; various proposals have been submitted and guidelines are already drawn up.

Sadhana (spiritual practice) is aimed at purifying the mind through discipline and self-awareness. Our daily schedule is designed to emphasize this: the morning begins with meditation and Hatha Yoga; two periods of Karma Yoga will consist of turning the mind to whatever task presents itself and offering one's energies in a selfless way; the balance of

the day is given over to noon meditation, two meals and free time for study and reflection; the day ends with Satsang and evening meditation -- a kind of continuous retreat situation. That is to say, a retreat from the usual kind of ego-involvement, and an entry into a less limited mode of awareness and action.

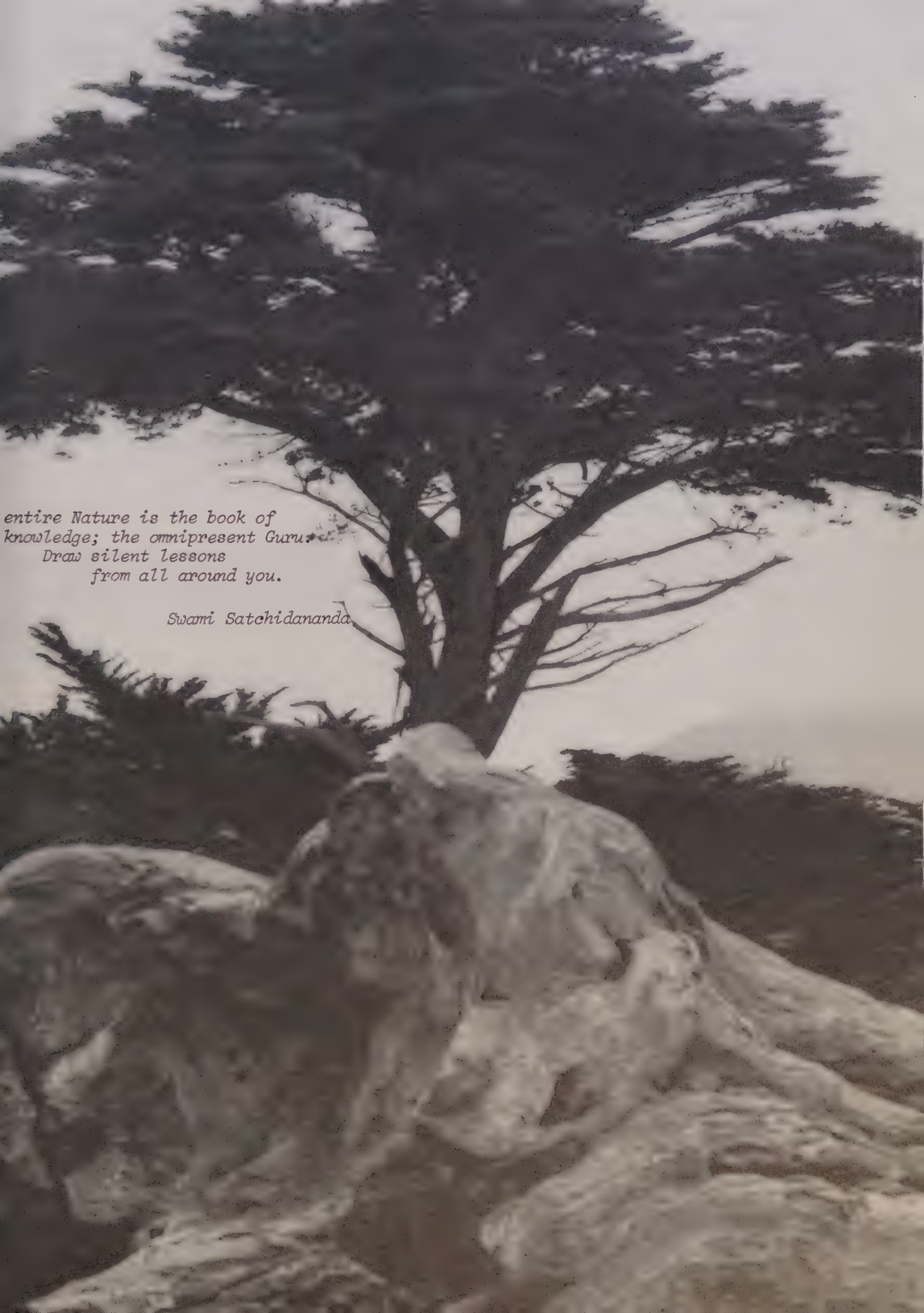
Yogaville will be officially opened on Saturday, April 14, 1973, when Swamiji will be present to bless and consecrate the Ashram. On that day our neighbors in the surrounding communities are invited to share in our joy over the realization of this dream -- and so are all of you who read this.

During Easter Week we are having a five-day Retreat with Swamiji, from April 18-23.

On June 15th - 24th there will be the annual 10-day Retreat which is for us in the Integral Yoga Institutes the greatest and most intense growing experience of the year. Again we will be blessed with Swamiji's presence during the Retreat. In addition to the full schedule of Integral Yoga teachings and activities -- Hatha Yoga, Meditation, Karma Yoga, Chanting, Cleansing practices, lectures and discussions, and more -- we expect to have a unique presentation by several of the most prominent and inspiring teachers in the country today. Of course the size of this Retreat makes it necessary to use the larger accommodations which are available at St. Joseph's Retreat House in Monticello, New York.

Satchidananda Ashram - Yogaville East is open to all for Retreats and visits, welcoming anyone who would like to explore and practice the Yogic life ideals of self-unfoldment, service and dedication. For more details please contact us at Satchidananda Ashram/Box 108/Pomfret Center, Conn. 06259.

May the entire world find peace and joy.



*entire Nature is the book of
knowledge; the omnipresent Guru.
Draw silent lessons
from all around you.*

Swami Satchidananda

Satchidananda Ashram was begun last spring as a spiritual community and country retreat center by the West Coast Integral Yoga Institute families and other devotees. The Ashram is located in Lake County, California, about two hours north of San Francisco. Formerly a hot springs resort, the property came complete with hot mineral baths, indoor and outdoor pools, many springs of differing mineral contents, large buildings, detached cottages and dormitory-style housing. The forty-five acres of land sit atop Cobb Mountain, surrounded by oak, pine and manzanita trees, clean and quiet sky, abundant deer, rattlesnakes and red-headed woodpeckers. Currently about forty brothers and sisters live at the Ashram itself, in addition to seven babies and children. Their living quarters are divided into different sections separated by some distance: one area for Brahmacharis, the single men; another area for Brahmacharinis, the single women; and a third for householders, the married couples.

Much of our early experience in Ashram living has been characterized by attempts to overcome various difficulties in adjusting to unusual physical conditions. Our first summer drove home to us how hard it can be to work during long hot spells of up to 110 degrees. Large leaky roofs had to be completely renovated with the coming of autumn. Much of the physical structure of the property was and still is in need of repair to support a year-round community. Almost all of the housing was designed only for summer resort use and was not suitable for winter living, being unheated and uninsulated. Several substantial snowfalls and cold snaps as low as nine degrees have been encountered in our first

winter. Wood stoves had to be constructed continually for some time to fill this need. These stoves, made from 20 to 50 gallon steel drums, often with old bedsteads cut and welded together as stands, now grace and warm practically every home, office, work area and gathering place. Wood gathering is the constant occupation of at least one person, and the hills around us often echo with the sound of the chain saw cutting deadfalls into large round pieces for chopping. Everyone at the Ashram chops his or her own wood and carts it home several times a week.

Karma Yoga has formed a very large part of the spiritual life of the Ashram. Work has been very hard and many of us are experiencing what working-to-capacity is like. The daily routine and many of the special Karma Yoga projects involve more physical work than many of us had ever known in the past. An unusually heavy snowfall necessitates groups of people clambering atop several slippery buildings in the midst of the storm to shovel snow and thus avert collapsed roofs. Our natural foods industry participated in a health-food convention recently, and a dozen volunteers had to prepare for it by working as late as midnight after their regular workday. The Karma Yoga at the Ashram is exhilarating, purifying, exhausting.

Much of the work is directed toward the goal of becoming a self-sufficient community. Women sew meditation outfits to meet orders around the country. Several people run a natural foods store in a town an hour's drive away. The natural foods industry bottles oil and olives, makes nut butters,

and bakes bagels for distribution in northern California, as well as making breads and sweets for our store. An offset press which was donated to the Ashram will be moved up shortly so that various commercial printing jobs, as well as the printing of Swamiji's teachings, can be undertaken. Still, all our businesses are young, and it takes every available bit of cash to run such a community. Very recently, many ashramites have begun looking for any kind of outside work in the area -- waitress, secretary, farm-worker, handyman and the like -- to try to tide us over until the time when our own businesses will totally support us. At the same time we are looking for ways to reduce our expenditures for food, utilities, phone and

transportation. Ashramites receive a modest allowance for laundry and routine expenses. A small monthly allotment for clothing replaces worn-out overalls and supplies rubber boots and other bare necessities for the entire Ashram.

The community consists primarily of full-time ashramites who have donated all their personal assets to the Ashram and in turn have all their needs taken care of. Some full-time workers will also be working at outside jobs, donating their earnings to the Ashram. A genuine spirit of complete dedication has to be the keynote of this communal life. The Ashram is also fortunate to have a number of families who can pay for room and board, since they have some outside source of income. They live with us for at





the quiet sense of comradeship which comes from weathering the many problems together and growing in our mutual understanding.

Of course, the heart and lifeblood of Satchidananda Ashram is Swamiji. The official organization of the community is such that Swamiji has complete charge of everything, with all decision-making in his hands. When Swamiji is not physically present, his authorized representative acts in his place and is regarded as a transmitter of Swamiji's words with authority. There are also

least a three-month period. While they retain financial independence from the communal set-up, they have become an integral part of the Ashram family, contributing a large share of selfless service to the community.

There are many special joys which bless the Ashram. A number of close friendships with neighbors in the surrounding community are notable amongst these. The former caretaker of the property for many years and his wife are still very much a part of the place. For their abundant good advice and assistance we are continually grateful. An example of their kindness was a beautiful fun-filled New Year's Eve party which they gave for the entire Ashram in their home. Other neighbors have similarly become a real part of the family. The Ashram choir is another source of inspiration and fun for all. The choir, among other community performances, went caroling in a nearby church on Christmas. The many beautiful babies, including one born last summer at the Ashram itself, grace us all with their presence. Not least among the joys of our life here is

nine people in charge of the different areas of Ashram work who meet weekly with the Ashram head. The whole family also meets once a week.

During January and February of this year we are blessed with Swamiji's presence. We all gather for Satsang with Swamiji at least every other day and, typically, things are really beginning to happen quickly. As this is written, the Ashram is embarking on a week of complete Mouna (silence) except for a brief time after lunch when persons can talk quietly if absolutely necessary. This week is a trial period suggested by Swamiji to see whether we would like to try living as a Mouna Ashram all year-round. Diet is another area of change. Swamiji spoke of very plain food so that if you are hungry it is fine; if not you won't even want to eat.

To lead a life of maximum simplicity -- in dress, diet and all aspects -- has been one of his key teachings while here. We pray that the Ashram may grow to embody such simplicity, and to exemplify in every way the glorious path which he has given us all.

Om Shanthi Shanthi Shanthi -
Peace and Joy to you all.



A PRAYER for '73

This Moment is so precious, O Lord,
Teach me to live it fully;
It can not be boxed, frozen, stored,
Saved, sold, collected or displayed,
And once tossed into the winds of time
This Moment is swept away forever.

Teach me, O Lord, to find the center of each unique Moment
Unencumbered by yesterdays and tomorrows.
Teach me, O Lord, to celebrate the Now
With every fiber of my being.
To be committed to a Present tense.
To be responsible for a Present action.

This Moment: It is the only reality.
This Moment: It is the only joy.
This Moment: It is the only sorrow.
This Moment: The only me.

Owen Wilson

WHAT WE'RE DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING WHAT WE'RE DOING

NEW YORK CITY

Last fall certain changes were made in the family life at the Manhattan ashrams. These were, first, a shift in emphasis from work to Sadhana (spiritual practices) and family life; second, an attempt to share the work more fully among all family members; and third, to have a limit on the number of family members, as well as a commitment from each to stay at least six months.

All in all, the developments have been very positive. It has not been possible to change the distribution of the work as much as we thought; for instance, it has proved desirable to have no more than two people responsible for the receptioning. But in other areas, such as the kitchen, sharing has worked out well. At both ashrams the feeling is one of growing cooperation.

Because of the limit on incoming members, family life has developed a solidarity it did not possess before. More and more we are becoming real families, rather than boarders who happen to have something in common. At the same time, there is a feeling that it would be good to have some new people -- but in a way which will not upset the growing unity and commitment of the family.

One way in which this might be done is

to accept people at the ashrams as guests. They would come to stay for a definite period of time, perhaps a week, a month, or more, in order to live and share in the ashram life. Meanwhile, there would be no question of their having any family responsibility. They would be expected to follow the same Sadhana schedule as family members, but would simply do whatever Karma Yoga (yoga of service) they wished. And of course it may be that some of these guests would become members at the appropriate time. In the meantime the equilibrium of the family would be maintained without the family becoming indrawn. We even look forward to conducting weekend retreats at the downtown center, for people in the city who are unable to go out of town.

The strengthening of our own schedule of personal and group Sadhana has been the most conspicuous area of change over the past few months. The regularity of having Sadhana together seems to provide the basis for everything else -- from coming together as a family, to being able to share our work together in a reasonable way. In January we had a joint household Sat-sang with Swamiji. The result of this meeting was to strengthen the resolutions regarding the schedule which had been made last fall. The schedules were



viewed, with special emphasis on the morning and evening meditation, the morning Hatha practice, and the noon meditation.

We decided to keep both a group Sadhana record and personal Sadhana diaries. These will keep Swamiji, as Spiritual Teacher, in touch with what is happening in our spiritual practices, so they serve as a kind of chart showing "where we're at", which can prove useful in developing the regularity of one's practice and in having a greater consciousness of it. In addition, there is a definite benefit for the whole family: everyone is taking part in the practices that all have agreed to and which constitute the basis of ashram life, then the feeling of being a real family is considerably enhanced.

So far, all these changes have had a twofold effect, bringing us closer to each other, and bringing us closer to Swamiji. Swamiji can only be as close as we want him to be; if we don't accept his help, he cannot give it. For a long time the relationship was one-sided, with Swamiji giving and us sometimes receiving, sometimes not. In the past few months our awareness has been growing that we must take a more active part if we want to receive the benefits that Swamiji has to offer. We must actively seek his guidance, so that even though he may be physically absent from the ashram, he will be more and more the guiding spirit of our actions. OM Shanthi

HARTFORD


Although every class is special in its own way, the Hartford IYI is conducting a class of particular interest to us. This is held at the Gengras Center for Exceptional Children in West Hartford, Connecticut. The school is for children of elementary school age who are physically, emotionally or mentally handi-

capped. We were contacted several months ago by Dr. Joseph Lavender, who co-ordinates special programs for the handicapped throughout Connecticut. He felt that Yoga could possibly benefit the students, though he truthfully admitted that he was not yet sure how.

After several meetings to determine how to draw up the program, we came to the following conclusion: we know how to teach Yoga, but have no experience with retarded children; the teachers at the school know how to teach the children but have no knowledge about Yoga. So it seemed common-sense to teach the teachers Yoga, and to give them all possible aid in helping them to teach the children.

The first step was to convince the teachers that through the physical postures, breathing exercises, and relaxation techniques, there would be some tangible improvements in the children's personalities and a development of their inner capacities. At a lecture/demonstration set up for this purpose, all six of the Gengras teachers agreed that Yoga did indeed hold promise for the children, as well as for themselves. The program was thus set up in three parts -- first, the teachers would be given Hatha classes, with background in the Yogic psychology and philosophy; second, we would work together in developing the best methods for teaching the children; third, once the teachers had begun doing Yoga with the students, the IYI instructor would periodically come to the school to observe the class progress, making suggestions and the necessary corrections.

We are presently at the third stage of the program. The teachers have experienced the benefits of Yoga in their own lives, both physically and mentally. Now they have proceeded eagerly to work with the children. The first follow-up observation we attended would have melted the heart of even the



most skeptical person. Seeing these disturbed young ones harmoniously chanting "Om" together, looking up in the bow pose, and resting quietly in deep relaxation, made us more aware than ever of the infinite possibilities of Yoga.

The greatest satisfaction arises from the genuine enthusiasm which the children express in learning Yoga. Although they are retarded in certain aspects of their being, we saw hearts overflowing with purity and sweetness. Like everyone else, they too wish to feel their own inner peace. The Yoga is helping to tune their instruments properly.

This is just a pilot program. If it proves successful it may be started in schools similar to the Gengras Center throughout the state.

May the glory of Yoga shine through your disciples, Swamiji.

OM Shanthi

NEW JERSEY

We are presently holding Hatha Yoga classes twice weekly at the Morris County Jail in Morristown for the male prisoners. Classes consist of asana postures and discussions on how Yoga can help the prisoners deal creatively with their present situation. Originally there was only one class scheduled, but the enthusiastic response necessitated the addition of a second class. This was part of an experimental project initiated by Mrs. Crane Grosbeck, a psychologist concerned with prison environments.


We are also involved with Break-Through, a program sponsored by Growth Projects, a non-profit organization. Break-Through offers

young people an alternative life-style to the drug culture, giving them a chance to take their first steps in a specific direction. It is organized to help them open doors to self-awareness and individual potential. The program consists of a full day's activities where participants can choose specific craft projects to attend. Everyone is required to attend the meditation and Hatha Yoga class which initiates each program. The programs are held in different communities throughout the state. Warner-Lambert Pharmaceutical Co., located in Morristown, donated \$40,000 to the making of a film about the Break-Through Program. It will be shown in communities around the state and possibly used for television. Although the program is still in the experimental stages, it will soon be funded by the government.

Discussions are held with Senior Citizen groups in Rutherford and New Brunswick on how Hatha Yoga increases longevity and strengthens bodily organs. These groups provide Encounter-like sessions for the elderly, allowing them a chance to talk over personal problems and worries, and to discover ways to enjoy life more fully. Additional programs are being planned for the future.

We are presently conducting a 4-week seminar at Drew University in Madison, N. J., discussing the various aspects of Integral Yoga. The seminar is offered through the Theology department and will be an accredited course beginning next semester.

We are all very happy that God has given us so many different ways to serve. May we be successful in doing His work and shine forth as an example of Swamiji's teachings and love. OM Shanthi



CHAPEL HILL

Chapel Hill, N.C., home of Duke University and the University of North Carolina, received Swamiji for a series of talks and programs last April. Inspired by their experiences, a group of students decided to explore the teachings and practices of Integral Yoga and are now carrying Swamiji's work to the students and residents.

In addition to on-campus Yoga classes at both universities, instruction is also being offered through the Chapel Hill Department of Recreation. Already the program is quite popular. Townspeople of all ages are invited to participate in the Hatha classes and ask over their questions about Yoga.

There are presently five students living in the Ashram and observing full daily Sadhana program. Karma Yoga includes not only teaching of classes at the Ashram, but also caring for and milking the Ashram's six goats. (Another is on the way.)

The presence of several other spiritual communities in the area attests to the interest in developing inner awareness here, both among the local population and among the 5,000 students. Swamiji's projected spring visit to Chapel Hill has already generated a large response. Radio and Television interviews in addition to lectures (and hopefully Manthra initiation) are on the schedule so far.

OM Shanthi

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The physical situation at the Washington IYI is such that we don't have a room big enough for an average-size Hatha class. This sounds like it could be a problem, but it has actually become an advantage. The size of the household has

encouraged our teachers to travel to many different parts of the city to give classes. In this way we are reaching people who would not want to travel across the city to attend classes in the IYI household.

We have also been blessed by the fact that students will often take the initiative in finding a place for the classes. Sometimes a person who has been attending one of the classes will mention that he would like to see a class started in his neighborhood. Or someone will call the Institute who hasn't attended a class but, again, would be interested in taking instruction close to home. In both cases we tell them that we would be glad to furnish a teacher if they can find at least fifteen interested people along with a space to conduct the class. Inevitably they are able to find a place where the class can be held rent-free.

The managements of apartment buildings in many parts of the city are anxious to offer activities available to the residents. This has been a big help. And of course, people who don't live in the buildings may also attend.

Aside from community service programs, this is the way all of our classes have been set up so far. At the moment, several people at area universities are researching on-campus class facilities.

Through the enthusiasm of so many students in the Capitol area, we are able to reach a wide variety of people. And of course, it offers us a chance to learn and grow too. By keeping our conscious awareness on all of it as Sadhana (spiritual practice), and sharing that awareness with as many people as possible, we come closer to discovering that SAT-CHID-ANANDA which dwells within us all. May we be blessed with this light.

OM Shanthi

news of SWAMI



Satsang at the home of Mr. Giri, Coimbatore, South India.

Let them see your face my child, and thus know the meaning of all things, let them love you and thus love each other.

Rabindranath Tagore

Once again our beloved Swamiji has circled the world with his love, blessings and long-awaited presence. One more mala has been completed and thousands in India, Ceylon and Asia have been newly inspired with fresh energy to move forward in their spiritual journeys.

This was a quick and unexpected trip which began with the urgent request for Swamiji's presence in Hong Kong at the wedding of Michael Harilela, the last of the six Harilela brothers who have been devotees and friends of Swamiji for many years. Because he would be so close to India and Ceylon, Swamiji felt that after a two years' absence he would pay a short visit to both of those countries first. He arranged to leave by the 1st of December in order to return to New York by the 22nd, to celebrate his Jayanthi with the East Coast families as he had promised.

After 25 hours of flight, Swamiji arrived in Bombay, India, into the welcoming arms of the Mehta family

and close devotees. It was a double blessing for Sohini Mehta, who was preparing to leave for America for Swamiji's Jayanthi (birthday) on December 22 - the realization of a 22-year-old dream. The two short days were spent in many meetings, gatherings and Satsangs that lasted well into the nights. Even on the way to the airport, Swamiji visited an ailing devotee to bless with his healing thoughts.

The flight to Madras occurred in the midst of a downpour. There were floods in and around Madras and all planes were being diverted to Bangalore. Swamiji's friend, Mr. Kuppuswamy, the police commissioner who came to the airport, soon lost hope of receiving him. Incredibly, all was clear for his landing, while a few minutes earlier, another plane was diverted. Can you imagine the feelings of Mr. Kuppuswamy?

The next morning, Swamiji flew to Coimbatore, where a large group greeted him with a pada puja ceremony at the airport itself. Many more were waiting at Mr. Giri's house for

Satsang which lasted well into the night.

Chettipalayam was the scene of a large reception in the house of Swamiji's birth and childhood. After the Sanmarga Sangam members recited prayers, Swamiji spoke to the group which consisted of many of his family members, a brother, two sons, grandchildren and villagers who remember him as a boy.

Swamiji was scheduled to depart the next morning, but heavy flooding stopped all transportation. The people couldn't hide their joy at their good fortune, and took advantage of the time to be near him as much as possible. One of Swamiji's relatives, Karunthagiri, said the rains were the tears of everyone who was sad that his visit was so short, and that's why they were holding him there. In the midst of the flooding, Swamiji paid a brief visit to the home of a long-time disciple, Selvi Sarasu, who hadn't been informed of the Indian trip. You can imagine the joy at suddenly seeing Swamiji in the doorway after a two years' absence.

The sun was setting as Swamiji stepped out of the plane to be greeted by the large crowd of Ceylonese devotees at Columbo airport. Sri Shanmugan and Sri Vimalananda Mataji from Sat-chidananda Tapovanam drove him two hours through winding country roads to the Kandy Ashram. In the dark of night devotees from various parts of Ceylon were gathered in the middle of the road to perform a puja and welcome him home. One of Swamiji's main reasons for visiting Ceylon was to see Ponnaramma, the older sister of Kandy Mataji and Trincomalee Mataji. She was near death, but she had told her brother that she would not die until she saw Swamiji again. Even though his stay in Ceylon was only for 36 hours, Swamiji had already made plans to drive many hours to see her in Trincomalee. He was amazed to learn that she had risen from her bed and taken a bus all the way across Ceylon to be there for his arrival at Kandy Ashram. These were few and precious hours; after lunch and Satsang the next day

he had again to be driven back to Columbo. Before he left, they had already written up the itinerary for his next visit.

On the plane to Hong Kong, Swamiji remarked that with all the preparation for a wedding in two days, it was unlikely that anyone from the Harilela family would be able to meet him at the airport. To his surprise, much of the family was there, including Michael, the groom, as well as many of Swamiji's Chinese disciples and friends. As always, the entire Harilela family, the six brothers, their wives and children and Ammi, their Mother, welcomed Swamiji warmly.

The wedding was a beautiful celebration at the Hong Kong Hilton for over 1000 guests. Swamiji was seated next to Michael under the wedding canopy for the ceremony. Swamiji presented Michael and his bride, Shermila, with Japa malas, and quietly blessed their life together to be full of peace and joy. As they assembled to cut the ornate wedding cake, they spontaneously called for Swamiji to give the blessing. These were his words: "You, Michael and Shermila, have been brought together by God's Grace. And your very first act after your union is cutting this cake. You are going to feed each other a small piece of it and then share it with all those gathered here. This is a symbolic act for your life of sharing and caring. This is the first lesson of a dedicated life. Be dedicated like this always and ever enjoy happiness. God be with you."

Thelma (Shanthi) Heitmeyer has been a student of Swamiji's and taught Yoga in Hong Kong for many years. Her 89 year old mother also knows and loves Swamiji well. Since his last visit, she had been in a car accident and had lost much of her hearing and memory. Thelma requested that Swamiji visit her, even though she might not remember him at all. As soon as Swamiji walked in, she got up with a beautiful shining face and

hugged him, saying how happy she was to see him. It was an inspiring visit for her, as for all who were fortunate to be there. She sat near Swamiji, giving him tea, taking good care of him. She expressed some sadness over the loss of her hearing and memory, but Swamiji beautifully told her just to accept God's will. After all these years of hearing and remembering, she should just use this time, free from all distractions, to reflect on God and rest in His peace. By the time Swamiji left, her face was at peace and radiant with contentment and joy.

On Swamiji's last evening in Hong Kong a talk was arranged at the Hari-lela mansion for all the local devotees and friends, many of whom are Chinese.

Although seven of the eighteen days were spent among the loving people of Hong Kong, the time for Swamiji to depart came all too soon. But it was from smiling faces that he departed; they know the great bond of love between them will always bring him back, and it will keep him in their hearts and them in his, always.

After stopping in the Los Angeles IYI, Swamiji reached New York on the evening of December 20 amidst a huge crowd of welcoming faces. Somehow, there seemed to rise up a huge sigh of relief as he stepped into sight - relief to

know that all the thousands of devotees around the world had really allowed him to come back here so quickly for his Jayanthi on the 22nd.

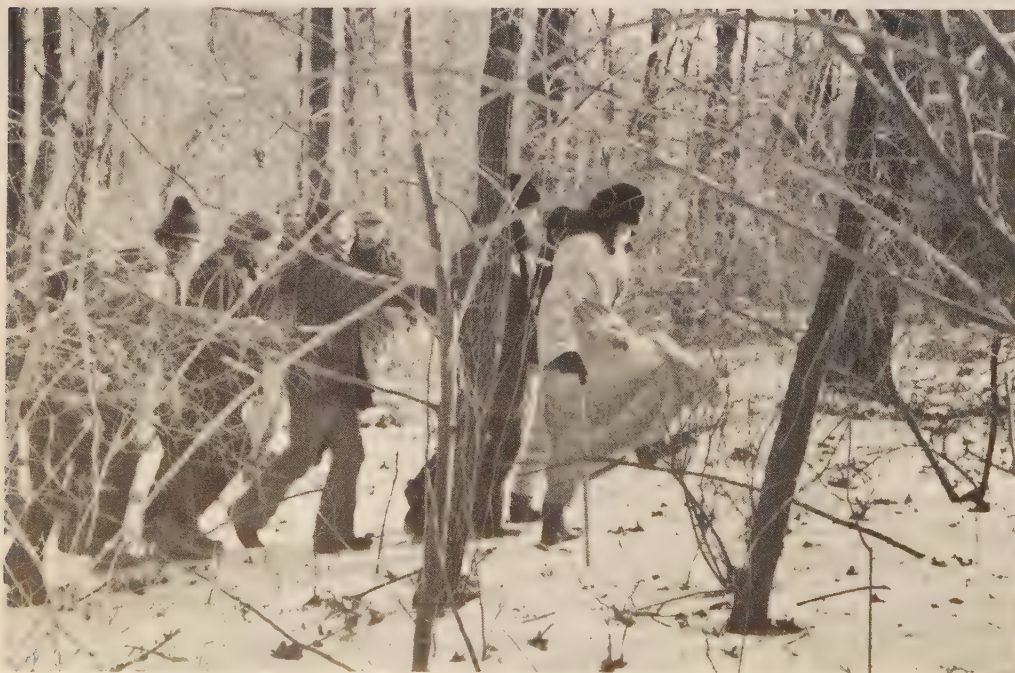
More than 500 people took part in the celebration of Swamiji's 58th Jayanthi (birthday) at Columbia University. Offerings ranged from fruits and flowers to poetry and dance. One of the most moving moments occurred with the introduction of Mrs. Sohini Mehta, a disciple for 22 years, who had travelled all the way from India to be present on this evening.

On the 26th of December, Swamiji spoke to about 100 inmates of the Danbury Federal Prison in Connecticut. His inspiring message to the men was that we are the masters of our Karma in all circumstances; that there is no justification for resenting anything or anyone on account of our present condition; that by learning humility and dedication we can make every moment and every place the soil for spiritual growth.

The New Year opened with the purchase of Satchidananda Ashram - Yogaville East. Plans and visions of the future overcame the bitter cold and high snows when Swamiji, as pathfinder and troopleader swept 80 of us along on an exhausting and exhilarating mid-January "run" of the

property. Eventually the Ashram will be Swamiji's permanent residence.

On the 13th of January, a household and business meeting was held with both New York ashrams. Those present gained a clearer understanding of what we're doing and why: that Yoga involves more than a system of practices - Yoga is perfection in action; that the striving for this



Mid-winter trailblazing in Connecticut.

perfection should permeate everything we do; that the IYI is an instrument for service to humanity; and that the striving for perfection in service requires the striving for perfection in business. Another invaluable lesson from the Master.

"Talk Back", a live radio show in Hartford, Conn., interviewed Swamiji on January 17, the day before he left for California. A large crowd saw him off at the airport in New York and a large crowd greeted him at the airport in San Francisco. One student described Swamiji's six-week stay at Satchidananda Ashram - Yogaville West in this way:

"Through divine Grace, Swamiji has been sent to us for a few weeks at Satchidananda Ashram. His pure form walks amongst the families, the carpenters, the seamstresses, the woodchoppers, the dogs, the bagel-bakers and all the multi-jobbed Ashramites, reflecting with each word, each graceful step, that peace that is 'the meaning of all things'.

"His arrival has brought Satsangs, guests, singers and chanters (Sant Keshavadasji has visited), films and slides of the tours and Retreats) -- and the beginning of real Ashram life: trying, practicing, realizing, under Swamiji's guidance, the benefits of simplifying dress and food, working in silence, coming together in spiritual studies (Raja and Gita classes), chanting and meditation.

"His physical mirror reminding us of our reasons, our goals in living, invoking such fullness in every person here. We have learned to love him, we pray we can now learn to love each other, the world, as well."

In one of the early Satsangs at the Ashram, Swamiji spoke of the need for simplicity in food when trying to control the senses: the tastier the food, the more one is always wanting to eat. The local Methodist minister was attending that evening for the first time, and Swamiji's talk turned towards the unity behind all religions. He began in a way to criticize the

Christian Church for not always recognizing this. The talk went on later than usual, and at the end Swamiji apologized for keeping the group so late. To everyone's joy, Reverend Houser stood up and said, "Swamiji, you have made the food too tasty -- we just wanted to keep on eating." With that first meeting a bond was formed between the minister and the Ashram. Afterwards he brought members of the church to Swamiji's Satsang and took Swamiji to speak at the church itself.

Dr. Rammurti Mishra and his students welcomed Swamiji for lunch in their new San Francisco center, on February 3. That same evening, Sant Keshavadasji joined Swamiji in the main hall of the San Francisco IYI. The crowd was so great that loudspeakers had to be installed on the floor below to enable everyone present to share in the Satsang. The air was filled with the words of Swamiji and the music of Sant Keshavadasji.

A number of stops on Swamiji's West Coast schedule called for radio and television appearances. Public talks were given in Santa Clara, Santa Cruz, San Francisco, Nevada City. Campus appearances included the University of Santa Barbara, the University of San Diego and U.C.L.A.

From California, Swamiji's itinerary calls for lectures in Seattle, Portland, Dallas, St. Louis, Denver and Wichita.

Meanwhile back in New York, a special half-hour presentation entitled "Swami Satchidananda and Yoga For The City" was broadcast on National Educational Television on February 19.

Following a mid-March visit to Swami Nirmalananda's Sri Ma Ananda Monastery in Oklahoma City, Swamiji will speak on Eastern techniques of prayer and meditation in a conference on "Doing Prayer" at the University of Notre Dame in Indiana. After two days in Detroit and a day in Iowa, he will return to New York on March 31.



Sohini, Swamiji's first disciple, at the Jayanthi.

Between Guru & Disciple

Mrs. Sohini Mehta, Swamiji's first disciple, lives with her family in Bombay, India. Through Ramaa, one of Swamiji's secretaries, she consented to share with us some of the teachings which Swamiji imparted to her, and which she employed with tremendous success. But beyond any particular teaching, Sohini communicates her unlimited love for her Gurudev. In India teachings are not disembodied; they are made flesh in the body of the Guru. Sohini is expressing the fact that her spiritual success is made possible by her belief in her Guru, Swami Satchidananda. For the disciple, love and faith in the Guru are the threads that weave the magic carpet which carries the seeker to God.

I first met Swamiji one day in 1950, in Bombay, India, where I lived with my family. I found that I was unable to stop crying in his presence. He asked me if there were some trouble: "Daughter, why are you crying?" I said that I was not well -- my physical health was poor and my peace of

mind was disturbed. He told me to begin by taking care of my health; the mind would gradually cease to disturb me. Following his advice, I started practicing pranayama (breathing exercises) on a daily basis.

During this time Swamiji was staying in Rishikesh. I did not

use English much, so I asked if I could write to him in Hindi.

"No, you must use English.

Write in words, not even sentences. I will understand."

Slowly I began to study the books by Swami Sivanandaji which had been printed in English. Gradually I began writing to Swamiji.

In 1955, my family and I were blessed to accompany Swamiji by train to the Sivananda Ashram in the sacred Himalayas. For over one month I stayed there, taking part in the daily ashram activities. I was deeply inspired to begin living the "Life Divine". This means to live for God, always lovingly, always selflessly.

I learned from Swamiji to concentrate on repeating God's name continuously while I go about my daily work. I find this keeps the mind happy and gives ever more Shakti (life-giving energy). I learned the asanas and pranayams and practiced regularly for fourteen years. When I met with a bad accident, Swamiji advised me to leave the asanas, and not to worry; from so many years of continual practice, the body was as strong as a machine, and very elastic. Today I am in excellent health and I continue with pranayama, Surya Namaskar ("Salutation to the Sun" -- a physical exercise performed with a meditative attitude upon arising), and Meditation.

Several times I strongly wanted to see Swamiji and talk to him, although he was thousands of miles away. Incredibly, he himself would call me and say, "Child, make the arrangements -- Come!" Somehow the necessary things would be there, and the next day I would be ready to go to Ceylon, Rishikesh or America.

The joy in my life has been realized through the grace of the Guru. Even though I rarely see Swamiji I feel his presence with

me as I practice his teachings in my daily thoughts and actions.

Through my faith I am getting All. Getting "All" does not mean a lot of "things". I do not want anything because I am only interested in doing the will of God. I discover blessings upon blessings are in my life.

Swamiji never asked me to renounce anything. Years before I used to love all kinds of luxuries, yet the interest in these material things left me in a natural way as I concentrated more on the inner spirit, as I dedicated myself to giving God's love to everyone.

As Swamiji teaches, when you stop wanting the things, everything wants you! This is because the one freed from greed and selfishness is like the honey in the flowers. No one need invite the bees to the fragrant flowers. When the bees smell the sweet stuff, they come automatically. So with the person at peace; all spiritual wealth comes of itself.

I came to America on a pilgrimage, especially for Swamiji's Jayanthi celebration. Often now people ask me to go sightseeing for this and that. . . I tell them I am seeing everything while I am with my Gurudev, hearing everything while I hear his guiding word.

Probably, if you were to see me now, you would see a small child, crying and laughing at the same time, thinking of God.



Jai Gurudev!



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